

HUMANITY AND ITS PROBLEMS

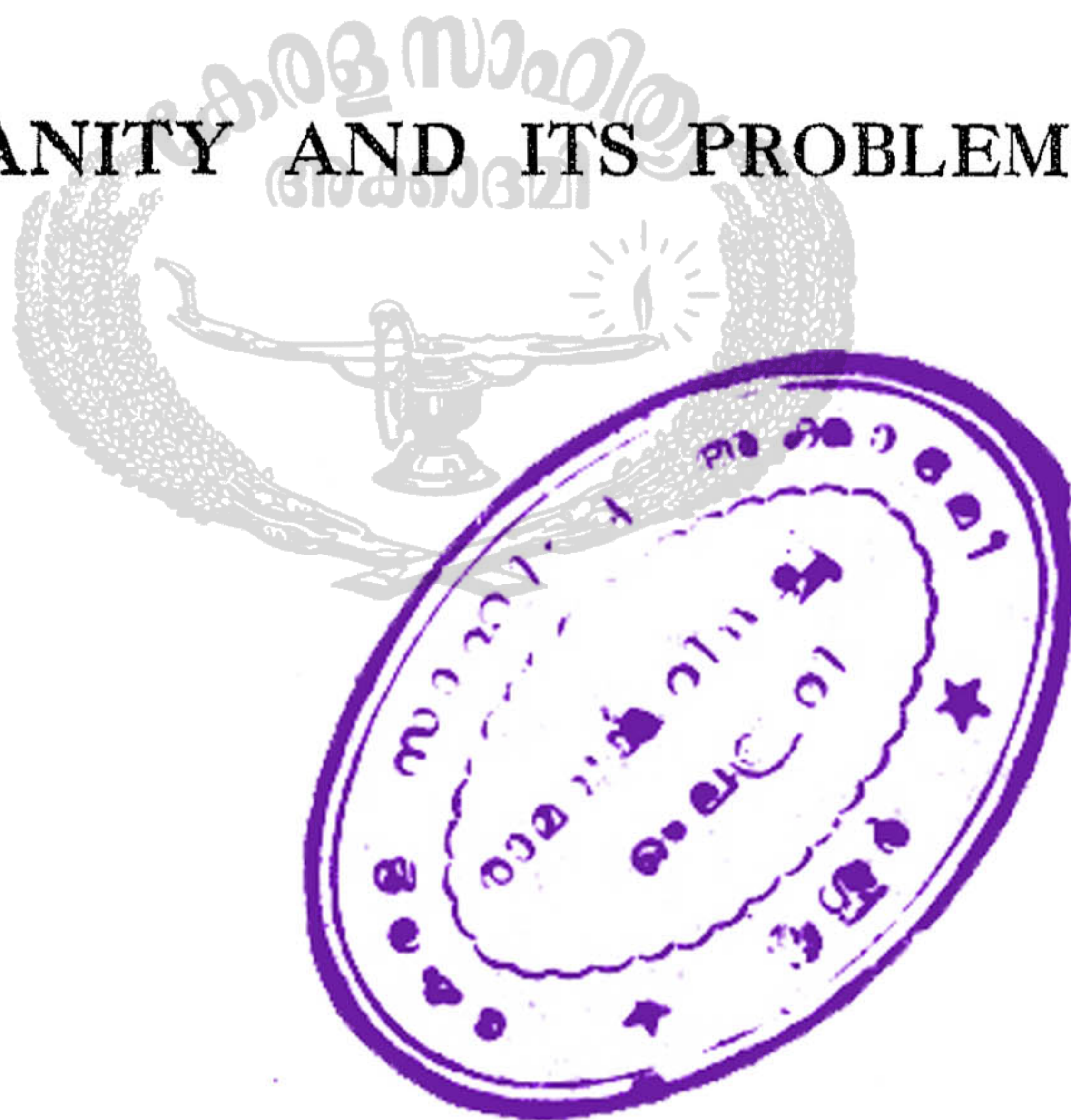
BY

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36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

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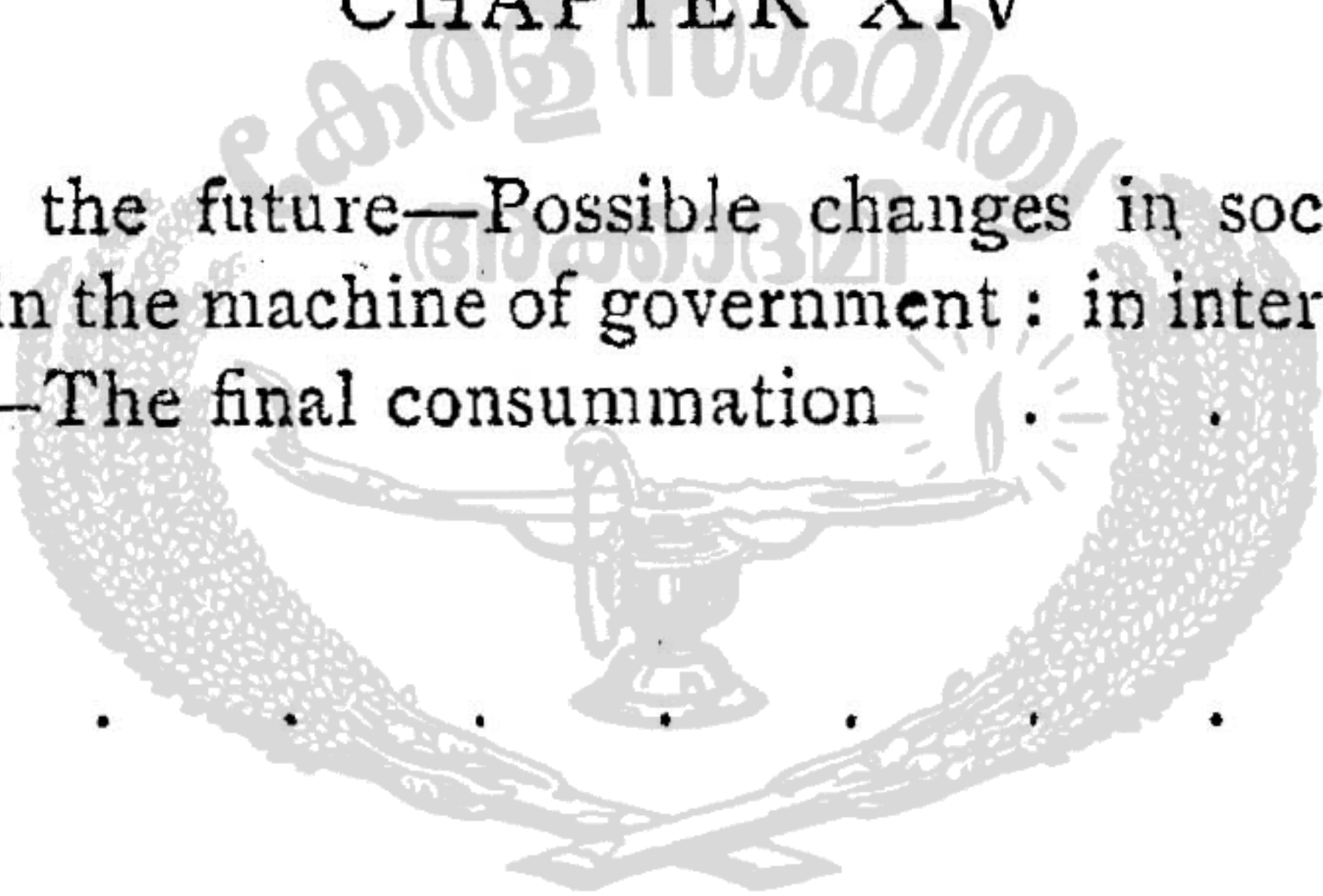
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HUMANITY AND ITS PROBLEMS

CHAPTER I

THE SUBJECT

What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form, in moving, how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! and yet, to me what is this quintessence of dust.—HAMLET

THE above passage eloquently suggests the problem that has tantalised the thoughtful mind in all ages. What is man ? What is the secret of his origin ; what the mystery of his future ? Consider on the one hand his complex physical structure, the marvellous delicacy of his parts, the wonderful adaptation of means to ends that his whole organisation presents ; and, above all, that mysterious faculty, the mind, whose powers seem to place man at the very summit of created things. Consider, on the other hand, his actual circumstances, the constant struggle for a bare subsistence, the sordid wretchedness and blank despair of the many, the gilded idleness and the bored indifference of the few. We cannot fail to contrast man's possibilities that make him but a little lower than the angels,

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with the petty trifling that constitutes the sum and substance of his life ; the wonderful powers that make him master of the world, and suggest for him a lofty destiny, with the shallows and the miseries in which the voyage of his life is so often bound. God-like in his faculties ; yet a mere paragon of animals in his utter dependence on his surroundings. This riddle has vexed the mind of man for countless generations ; but the key has ever eluded him. The little span of human life stood out as a narrow circle of light in a universe of night ; and man himself, helpless as driftwood on the tide, has come out of the black obscurity behind, to be thrust forward by the remorseless hand of time towards the darkness in front. Since man first acquired the power of thought he has sought to pierce the black veil that hid the future from him ; while the unseen fate that lay behind it has filled his mind with terrors which the mad fancies of the insane could not surpass. " Ay ! but to die, and go we know not where," has been the burden of the question that has tortured man for ages. What a strange variety of answers he has provided for his own relief !

His anxiety for an answer has led him to accept any solution that would set his mind at rest, has led him to hate with a bitter hatred those who have challenged his beliefs and revived his torturing doubts. The past has not troubled him. His limited knowledge has enabled him to accept without question the idea of specific

creation. But the future! Some have found it impossible to conceive an eternity of consciousness for the individual. The very thought of such an unfathomable abyss of time produced in them a mental dizziness which compelled its rejection. They found their answer in the ultimate cessation of personal consciousness, and the merging of the individual in the Universal after an indefinite period of purification in life. That is perhaps the most philosophical of the older views. Others have accepted for themselves an eternity of sensual happiness; while to the many questions such a solution provokes they have replied "Kismet. It is fate." This is of all answers the lowest and least worthy. Others there are of a more virile temper, who have combined these two. They have refused to regard man as the mere quintessence of dust; and have demanded for him a destiny commensurate with his own wonderful faculties. Unable to believe that such faculties could have been created merely to be destroyed, they have rejected ultimate annihilation as the individual fate, and have claimed an eternity of personal, conscious happiness as the proper destiny of man. The doubts and difficulties which others impotently referred to Kismet they boldly admitted, claiming like the first that this life is but a stage of purification, after which the deserving would receive their due reward.

We are not concerned here with the relative merits of these views. They are instructive, because they indicate so clearly the persistence

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with which man has pursued a knowledge of his own fate, the intense interest he has shown in that vital problem, and the restless eagerness with which he has sought to solve it.

These various and conflicting views, however, become of the gravest importance when we remember the far-reaching influence they have had upon the condition of mankind in the various countries in which they have been held. There have been innumerable occasions when men have striven to improve their condition by modifying the social or political systems under which they lived, by a better cultivation of the intelligence, by the introduction of new processes in the arts, and bolder investigations in the sciences. It is not difficult to conceive how profoundly the progress of the race at such times has been affected by the prevailing views as to man's origin and destiny. A belief in the specific creation of man lent itself easily to the assertion that any attempt to alter the existing state of things was an impious revolt against the Creator; and, as that belief was for many ages almost universally held, many an impulse to improvement must have been strangled at its birth. There is little doubt that, had other views on the great question of human origin prevailed at those periods, the direction and nature of human progress would have been considerably modified.

The same obstacle to progress exists at the present day, although more as an ingrained habit of mind than as the result of direct interference

with the progressive activities of the race. There is to-day a genuine spirit of reform, a great body of opinion earnestly seeking a remedy for the many ills that flesh is heir to. Yet the great majority of these reformers are dominated, for the most part unconsciously, by the idea of Specific Creation. Their minds work on the assumption that human nature in all its complexity was a creation by the exercise of a will; and their proposals too often rest on the supposition that a higher and a better species of human nature can be substituted by another effort of will. "Love one another" they cry with passionate insistence, "and heaven will be realised on earth." The intensity of the evils to be removed is admitted by all. They stand out in their hideous nakedness manifest to the whole world. The great majority of human beings groan under them, and would gladly be relieved. "Love one another" cries the reformer. "The remedy is so simple, and the cure so sure." It seems to him that the world has but to make up its mind to take his advice and seize the prize; and he feels a well-nigh hopeless despair when he sees mankind continue to hate and to suffer.

It is evident that proposals that might be successful were this view of human nature correct might well be useless, or even harmful, if human nature is a growth, progressing from one phase to another by slow and minute changes, as incapable of sudden alteration as a savage is incapable of sudden civilisation. We might find an illustra-

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tion of this point from the past history of organic life. It is commonly accepted among scientists that air-breathing animals have descended from fishes, drawing oxygen from water through gills. Reformers of the above school might say "The fish needs oxygen. It will obtain a more abundant supply from air than from water. Let us therefore take it from the water." Destruction of the organism would immediately result from the fact that it was not adapted to its new surroundings. The reformers of the evolution school would agree with the other in his final object, but would recognise that the change of conditions must be gradual, and must not exceed the adaptive power of the organism.

This illustration presents in an extravagant form what has taken place in the recent history of man, and what might well take place in the future. Numerous instances can be offered of the failure of "catastrophic" reform. The French Revolution was a revolt against a system of government which had failed to advance with the changing character of the people, and, as the gap widened, had become intolerable. The government went down before the cry of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." The rarified atmosphere of this ideal was, however, unsuited to the existing stage of human nature. It died at once; and despotism reigned again. There have been many earnest men, impressed with the social evils of their age, who have sought to establish an ideal, the antithesis of the evils they deplored. Their

communistic experiments have invariably ended in failure, for the same reason that they endeavoured to recreate human nature, to establish a system that might have succeeded with a different race of beings, but which was not adapted to the men and women of the time. At one time the English swept away the Monarchy in the same spirit of revolt against its manifest evils. The new system could not live, and monarchy rose again. History teems with such cases ; and from them we may learn that, although the violence of those various attempts was perhaps necessary to overcome the inertia of the existing system, the outcome has been, not the ideal aimed at, but a system more or less adjusted to that state to which the normal human nature of the age had progressed.

The ideal which provides the inspiration to such revolts must be shaped to a very important degree by those views on the origin and destiny of man to which reference has been made. The Puritan revolt in England, the Catholic subjugation of Spain, the Netherlands and the Americas, and various other great movements, will afford some idea of the influence these opinions have had in directing the energies, in moulding the ideal, and, we may add, in embittering the mind of man. In each instance the subsequent fate of the people has been very largely determined by the religious views, by the conception of man's relations with the Universal, which dominated the movement.

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The systems which involve the idea of specific creation have offered one special obstacle to consistent progress. To the followers of those systems human nature has been but a confusion of qualities of the most opposite kinds, independent of each other, coexistent in the same individual, but otherwise unconnected. Human nature has presented itself to them as a perplexing tangle of the most varied feelings and emotions—love and hate, selfishness, generosity, honour, truth, cruelty, lust, and a thousand other qualities, all appearing in varying degrees in each individual. What more natural than to believe that if they were implanted in man independently of each other, so the evil might be independently uprooted, and the good in the same way increased! Yet it would seem that if human nature, in its marvellous complexity, is but the outgrowth of simpler forms, these various qualities may possibly spring from a common root and form parts of a single organism, instead of being a mere association of independent units. In that case the violent attempt to uproot one may have a most disastrous influence on the others.

It is therefore desirable that we should learn whether the conflicting impulses in man do arise from a common root under the influence of his varied surroundings. A knowledge of that fact cannot fail to modify our attitude towards the many questions which concern the well-being of mankind. It will enable us to distinguish between those things which are essential to

human progress, and those which are not. It will teach us that in the world of human affairs it is the non-essential that divides men and turns their energies against each other; that on vital matters there is little difference between the instincts of men at the same stage of human development. An appreciation of that fact may in time lead men to join forces in the endeavour to attain the things that matter. The common action of mankind in that field would inevitably modify their differences in others. Take, for instance, the question of moral conduct. It is said "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." The churches approve it; the atheist no less. Each would welcome the day when that maxim becomes the general principle of human conduct. Yet where they might join in the common work of promoting the thing in which both believe, they fix their minds on the non-essentials in which they differ. The church, believing the atheist wrong in his theology, will not co-operate with him in any field. The latter, believing the church to be founded upon superstition, thinks more of overthrowing it than working with it. Yet can we doubt that mutual work to a common end would not only promote that end, but would lessen the differences between them by bringing each to recognise the honesty and truth of the other. The tory and the radical may be equally desirous of securing some specific reform; but their views on other matters differ, and mutual recrimination commonly takes the place of mutual

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co-operation in matters on which they think alike.

Many of these divergences of opinion would disappear if it were once recognised that the various qualities that now seem to distinguish human nature flow from a common source ; that we are in fact all made of the same clay ; that, except in the few cases of arrested or abnormal development, we are all much alike, with much the same impulses to good and evil.

The object of these pages is to suggest that the complexity of human nature, the extraordinary confusion of human conditions, are the natural outcome of the primeval qualities of living matter, of which self-preservation is the most prominent ; just as his intricate physical structure has evolved from that simple living matter. This is the thread that runs through the tangled skein of human affairs ; and by following it we may perhaps unloose many a knot that has seemed hitherto inextricable. It is in that vital principle which accounts for the phenomena of living matter that we find the motive without which our political and social systems would collapse. It works through all the activities of every living organism. Utopias have been created without reference to it, and have been shattered by it. No change or reform can be undertaken with success unless due allowance is made for it ; unless indeed it is the mainspring of their action.

In the following bird's-eye view of the development of humanity in the process of evolution,

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II

the main object is to present a consistent and coherent picture rather than a scientific demonstration, and to indicate how in the essential qualities of simple living matter we may find the root from which have sprung not only the physical body of man, but also his mental faculties, his strange beliefs, and his varied institutions. To the extent to which Evolution affords an explanation of the past we may look to it to answer the problem of the future.



CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF THE FIRST "MAN"

IT is now generally admitted by scientists that man has descended from an animal of a lower form, and that this non-human animal was itself derived from a still lower type; the whole chain proceeding back to the simplest form in which life is manifested. That earliest form was the minute particle of living matter—protoplasm. The successive stages of this long journey are obscure and difficult to trace; but sufficient is known to lend the greatest probability to the supposition that all organic life at present existing on this earth springs from this simple living matter.

Assuming that to be the case, and that man, in common with other organised life, derives all his complex and wonderful qualities from that remote source, is it possible to form an idea of the vital principle that animates man in all his many-sided activities by tracing through the ages the persistent influence of the vital qualities of the first living matter? There is much reason to believe that this direct connection exists; that not only may we see in that original living matter the ultimate source of man's physical

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structure, but that in the vital principle which distinguished that matter from the inanimate universe may be found the root of those complex mental and moral qualities that play so great a part in human affairs. We may even perceive in the relations which existed between the earliest living matter and the external world with which it came into contact the seed from which has sprung the social and political systems which mark the relations between man and the external world. The mere possibility that such a direct causal connection exists, not only between man's physical body, but between every aspect of his many-sided life and the simplest living matter, must make this question one of the first importance, and lend to it an interest beyond that of any other subject of human speculation.

What is that vital principle, the essential quality which distinguishes living from non-living matter?

The agent under whose influence changes take place in the condition of matter is commonly called force; and we may conveniently use the term "vital force" to indicate those active qualities of living matter to which its characteristic phenomena are due. The actual nature of force—the thing in itself—is unknown to us. Our knowledge of force is confined to the conditions under which it is manifested, and the effects which flow from it. We observe the changes brought about in the condition of matter under the influence of heat, of electricity, etc. It

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is seen that, given like conditions, similar changes are invariably produced under such influences. Of the intrinsic nature of the agent that brings about the change we are ignorant. Under certain conditions a solid metal becomes liquid. The agent we call "heat"; and if we are asked to define "heat" we are compelled to do so in terms of its effects, to call it an unknown something or condition under whose influence solid metal becomes liquid. We may go farther and define certain of the conditions under which heat is manifested. For example, we find that if two substances are rubbed violently together, that which we call heat appears. In the same way in the case of other forces with which science deals we may state, and sometimes produce, the conditions under which they are manifested, and may describe the effects which they produce. Beyond that we know nothing of them.

In the case of vital force science has not yet succeeded in defining or producing the conditions under which it is manifested. The analogy of other forces (or active conditions of change) would lead us to believe that there are conditions under which non-living matter (matter not endowed with vital force) becomes living matter (displaying those various phenomena which we attribute to vital force); but at present those conditions are unknown. The old doctrine that life comes only from life has not yet been disproved by observation or experiment. If, however, we are ignorant of the conditions under

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which vital force is manifested or produced, we have substantial knowledge of its effects, of the changes which take place in the condition of matter under its influence.

Vital force, or the life principle, is that to which living matter owes its distinctive qualities or functions. These functions are of four kinds. They are all manifested in living matter in its simplest form, and are sufficient to account for its most complex phenomena. In so far as they are both necessary and sufficient to all vital phenomena, any hypothesis founded upon them is deserving of acceptance.

These four functions may be described briefly as follows:

(1) Growth: the passive power of incorporating in itself under suitable conditions animate or inanimate matter, and of imparting to that matter its own distinctive qualities.

(2) Hunger: an active desire, in the nature of attraction, to come into contact with such suitable foreign matter.

(3) A power of internal adjustment to changing conditions, and

(4) Memory: This may perhaps be best described as *functional memory*, to distinguish it from the complex function of conscious memory in man and some of the higher animals. The latter is derived from it as a result of organic evolution. The functional memory of living matter is the power such matter possesses of retaining impressions and repeating past experi-

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ences. The intrinsic nature of this fundamental quality of living matter is altogether incomprehensible, and the imagination strives in vain to form some conception of it. Yet it is indisputable that living matter possesses this quality. Its existence is manifest throughout the whole animate world, from the simple cell to the most complex organism.

Evolution is due to the joint action of the third and fourth of these fundamental qualities of living matter, adaptability to new conditions, and the perpetuation of the new forms or characteristics so produced.

These qualities together constitute what we call vital force. They manifest themselves in the history of the simple cell. They are necessary to explain that history. They are all that is necessary to explain that history. They will, it is believed, be found to be all that is necessary to explain its subsequent history, and to account for the evolution of those highly organised beings that now inhabit the earth. It is useless and unnecessary to our present purpose to speculate on the antecedent history of living matter. Whether living matter made its appearance solely as the result of chemical action under special conditions ; whether living matter is merely the eternal Substance of the Monist manifesting itself in a special way under special conditions ; or whether the endowment of matter with the quality of life was the act of Creation is foreign to the present argument. The question of the origin

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of life affords an opportunity for many interesting speculations ; some founded on such facts as science has established, some ignoring those facts altogether. In the present condition of human knowledge the question is a fruitful source of discord ; and any discussion of that subject is likely to be judged not on its intrinsic merits, but according as it supports or violates certain preconceived ideas. Fortunately we are not concerned here with that difficult matter. It is sufficient for our present purpose to start with the fact of the existence of living matter in the simplest possible form, endowed with the vital qualities above mentioned.

Accepting that fact, to what extent does it account for the present condition of organic life, not only on the physical side, but on the psychic also ? Science has demonstrated with sufficient certainty that the physical body of man is derived by a process of evolution from simple living matter under the influence of vital force ; but some reluctance has been shown in pursuing the inquiry into other than purely physical regions. There is no such sharp line of division between these two aspects of organic life ; and regard for scientific truth compels us to inquire whether the principle of evolution, which is held to account for the physical body of man, does not also account for his mental faculties, his passions and emotions, his conscience, his social qualities, and the social, political and religious institutions which rest upon them.

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Let us then consider the life history of the simple particle of living matter, the precursor of all organic existence. Its whole vital functions consist in the effort to maintain its existence. It feeds, by the incorporation of foreign matter in its own substance. It grows, as a consequence of that incorporation. The object of its existence, if such a term may be used, is self-maintenance, self-preservation. Its only active quality is that self-regarding function, and it presents us with an instance of individualism in its fundamental form. We start then with individualism as the one primitive principle of living matter; not, be it remembered, the conscious direction of one's efforts to one's individual interests in the sense in which the term is commonly used to-day, but the unconscious tendency to self-maintenance inherent in all living matter.

As self-preservation is the sole purpose of the activities of the simplest living matter, so we may consider the instinct of self-regard (or individualism) as the primary quality of living matter in general. In the process of organic evolution other characteristics appear, born of the relations between the organism and its environment, and growing more numerous and complex as the organism develops. Man and other highly organised beings display a great diversity of character quite distinct from that primitive instinct of self-preservation; and these qualities, which are not inherent in living matter but are

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acquired in the process of organic evolution, may conveniently be distinguished as the "secondary qualities" of living organisms.

The growth of the plasma particle results in its cleavage into parts—probably as the result of internal stress when it has grown too large to maintain its original form. The parts, consisting of the same living matter, grow in their turn, and in like manner divide again. Thus the "population" increases as the result of that capacity of growth which we found to be one of the four functions of living matter. The mere principle of growth would, however, lead but to a mass of individual or distinct particles of living matter or cells. The mere function of growth alone would not produce diversity of form or character. The mass would be homogeneous in nature—an aggregation of similar units, and nothing more.

It "happens" that certain of these growing cells are not completely divided, the parts remaining attached to each other. The faculty of functional memory, the tendency to repeat experiences or conditions—one of the fundamental characteristics of living matter—here comes into play. The union of cells, at first more or less fortuitous, becomes characteristic of the living matter of which they are composed; and, as a consequence, subsequent divisions of these connected cells result habitually in cells attached to each other in groups or colonies. Each unit in the group maintains its individual character. It feeds, grows and divides as did the original single

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cell. Its vital principle is still unalloyed individualism—the “instinct” of self-maintenance. No secondary qualities are yet shown; but the habitual connection in groups foreshadows the first step in that direction.

The next stage in the long process is the gradual conversion of the group of otherwise independent cells into an organised body of cells. The process is a slow one. From time to time minute variations occur in the character and form of the cell group as a consequence of changes in its environment. The functional memory of the living matter tends to a repetition of these new forms and conditions; while, if the variations are of advantage in the effort of self-maintenance (the struggle for existence) by making food more accessible or more easily obtainable, growth will be more rapid, and consequently increase in numbers will be more marked than in those cells in which such variations have not occurred. “Advantageous” variations in the cell group take the form of a simple division of labour. Instead of each cell living its separate life, and performing all the functions necessary to its maintenance, certain of these functions are performed by specific parts of the group. As an instance of this we may consider the faculty of hunger, *i.e.* an active desire for food in the nature of attraction. This faculty, by causing a vibration in the walls of the cell, probably led to the power of locomotion as a function of the external cells of the group (these

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alone being in a position to exercise that function with advantage).

These variations, in the nature of division of labour, convert the cell group in course of time into an organism, an aggregation of cells not only physically connected, but mutually dependent in respect of those functions necessary to their preservation.

We need not dwell upon the process by which cells unite into groups, and these again develop into organisms under the influence of those four fundamental characteristics of living matter. We shall find later that this process presents a curious and suggestive analogy to that by which the isolated man-animal began to live in loosely connected groups, which groups in course of time developed into the highly organised social bodies we find in the world to-day.

Leaving this earliest form of living organism, let us proceed on our journey of which man is the end. We may notice in this present stage that the organism shows a steady advance. The various organs and their corresponding functions become more distinct, more adapted to their particular uses. The nature of the process is that just described—the maintenance of beneficial variations and their continuance—and the cause is to be found in the fundamental qualities of living matter which, for want of a better term, are called vital force. Self-maintenance is still the root impulse of the whole. The gradual development of specific organs results in more

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complex relations between the organism and the outside world. All the secondary qualities of living things arise as a result of the relations between the organism and its environment ; and so we find that these more complex relations, even in a low stage of organic life, bring into existence the first dim suggestion of those secondary qualities which play so great a part in the life of man.

Let us stop for a moment, and consider the fish-like ancestor of man. Various organs of sense have reached a stage of marked complexity and efficiency. As the maintenance of the fishes existence depends on its relations with its surroundings, so it has acquired various organs which serve to indicate any change that takes place in its environment. The function of locomotion has attained great perfection. The power of vision and of hearing (to a less degree) have also been acquired. The primitive brain now makes its appearance as that part of the organism which is specially adapted to receive impressions from the outside world, and to record by the function of memory the experiences so obtained. The appearance of the brain as a receiving centre for the impressions of the various sense organs leads the way to the acquisition of secondary qualities. Among the first of these secondary qualities is fear. Where every organism except the strongest is liable to be destroyed by the more powerful, the notification by the senses of the presence of the danger is followed by an impulse to escape. This instinct is the result of

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the ingrained memory of previous experiences in the race. It is, in the lower organisms, an unconscious process—a reflex action merely. As it was one of the first of the secondary qualities to appear in the developing organism, so we find it one of the most powerful and persistent characteristics of the higher organisms. The sense of fear so common among human beings when alone in the dark may be attributed directly to this instinct which became implanted in the organism at so early a stage. The fact suggests why those instincts which acquired their strength before the faculty of reason appeared can resist to some extent the influence of reason itself—a truth of every day experience with all men.

Certain other characteristics which play an active part in the lives of the highest organisms begin to appear in this low stage of development. Of these the most important are the result of sexual reproduction. In the earliest stage the species was propagated by the mere division of the parent into parts. Young are, however, now produced from eggs (cells) given off by the parent organisms. We have here the physical fact of maternity ; but, so far, there is no more than the purely physical bond between parent and offspring. From the moment of birth they are distinct and independent individuals. The new circumstances under which young are produced, especially when produced in considerable numbers, induces the habit of living in groups—mere

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physical proximity for the present—recalling the history of the cell group as an aggregation of physically connected but otherwise independent units. The evolution of the process of sexual reproduction is especially important inasmuch as it gives rise (though at a much later stage of development) to the secondary qualities, parental and filial love, and to that important social unit, the family. For the moment, however, self-preservation—the exercise of those original and acquired functions which serve to maintain the existence of the organism—is still the sole motive force of the individual. Its influence is direct and manifest in every action of the organism. Self-preservation as the fundamental principle of life is not yet obscured by those secondary motives, which seem in the case of man and other animals diametrically opposed to it. Self-sacrifice, the conscious and deliberate surrender of existence in the interests of others, the noblest of secondary qualities, which seems at first sight quite irreconcilable with the root principle of living matter, will be found to take its place with the other moral qualities as a natural consequence of the four primary functions of living matter already described.

Slowly the ages roll away, and slowly the organism evolves into more complex and highly developed types. From the fish to the reptile; thence to the amphibian and the air-breathing land animals. We need not stop to consider this process stage by stage. An almost incon-

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ceivable abyss of time has passed; countless generations have come and gone; till at length we reach the creature who may be said to have been the earliest of our human ancestors. There is no particular point at which the human race can be said to begin. In one sense, however, we may fix the time at which the first distinct human being appeared. The whole evolution of organic life may be likened to a tree. The stem is the common parent of the countless species now existing. Under the influence of varying conditions the stem divides into branches; these into smaller branches; and these again into twigs. The various species of organic life now existing represent these twigs after this long process of division and subdivision. There was no doubt a point at which the human twig and the ape twig sprang from a common branch; and the point of separation may be regarded as marking the first appearance of man. The difference between the two twigs immediately after their separation would, however, be so minute, the acquisition of new characters and the development of old ones so slow, that we should at that stage be unable to find any well-marked characteristics separating the early human from his brother the ape. The most we can do is to look for that faculty which chiefly distinguishes man from his nearest relatives. We find that in his mental powers; and it is sufficient to say that at a certain period one branch of the common stock showed a marked development in its brain organ.

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The human race may be said to have commenced when that brain development had proceeded far enough to distinguish the man-animal from his ape-like kin.

What was the character and what the circumstances of this first man-animal?

As regards his physical state we need say little. He was somewhat shorter than the modern man, a hairy, naked, muscular creature with heavy jaw and retreating forehead. His organs of sense were highly developed; while his mental powers still fell far below those of the lowest savage in the world to-day. He had not become a tool-using animal, except that he was slowly acquiring the habit of using the sharp edge of broken flints in certain simple ways. Even this, small as it may seem, implies a great advance over the lower types from which he had evolved. He was a solitary animal, wandering in search of food, accompanied only by the female and their young. The representatives of the most advanced stage of organic life were during the earlier period of their evolution necessarily few in number compared with the great body from which they sprang, and were therefore under no necessity to live in herds. They did not devour each other, for the simple reason that sufficient food could be found more easily and more safely among the lower and weaker species. The fundamental principle of self-preservation led the animal to seek food and avoid danger. We find here an explanation of the fact that the higher organisms are not cannibals.

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The animal at first avoided others of its kind, and sought its food elsewhere from the mere instinct of self-preservation. Thence grew the habit of not devouring its kind; and later the instinctive repugnance to such food. This acquired instinct is, however, even in man, generally weaker than the primary one of self-preservation; and in acute distress, when hunger cannot otherwise be satisfied, the animal will attack and devour others of its own species.

Thus the primitive man wandered over the face of the earth, a savage, solitary animal.

The association of the male and the female was a natural consequence of the conditions under which the species was reproduced. The higher organisms are distinguished by the relatively long period during which the young are unable to maintain themselves; and this fact, combined with the partial dependence of the mother during the period of gestation, led to the more or less permanent union of the male and female. The only ties between them in these early days were the sexual bond (sexual passion being a secondary quality resulting from the evolution of sex), the habit of association, and the compulsion of the stronger. The female, as the weaker animal, was entirely subject to the stronger male. In that early period of development, when the instincts of the animal were still solely self-regarding, the will of the male governed those connected with him. The weaker, females and children, had no "rights," but lay entirely at the mercy of their lord and master. At the same time, the long

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period of dependence of the children, and the periodic helplessness of the female, combined with her general relative weakness, compelled the male to defend them from external attack. This habit in time became an instinct ; though those finer feelings that mark most men and women to-day were still unborn. Thus in the primitive family the male exercised an uncontrolled despotism over the women and children ; and, though recognising no " rights " in them as against himself, savagely defended them from the attacks of others. Degraded as seems this relation between male and female, this primitive state of things obtains even to-day among the more brutal sections of civilised nations, as the police records of our cities too amply testify ; while among the educated classes the female is still frequently regarded as an inferior being, rightly subject to the male, and unfit to exercise any voice in the affairs of the community. This inferiority dates from the age of the primitive man-animal, so slowly are these early secondary characteristics modified.

The offspring of these early Ishmaels were born in but small numbers owing to the dangers and the hardships of the parents' mode of life ; while the number reaching maturity was doubtless hardly more than enough to replace the parents. Population under such circumstances increases slowly.

Meanwhile the long dependence of the young, and the special part played by the mother in rearing them, was leading by slow degrees to that wonderfully powerful maternal instinct common

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to all the higher types of organised beings. The habit of protecting the young (without which the species could not have continued to exist) had grown into an instinct ; but in that early stage the bond did not extend beyond the period of dependence. The mature young wandered away to seek their own livelihood—were in all probability driven away by the male.

Such was the state of the first man-animal. He was still dominated by the simple principle of self-preservation. The influence of that instinct can be discerned in every act of his life. Nevertheless, the pure instinct of self—an unalloyed individualism—had given rise to certain secondary qualities in the process of adaptation to external conditions. We have seen how it laid the seeds of fear, to blossom later into hate as the mental powers developed. The sexual instinct had already appeared ; while the female now became associated with and subject to the male. The first dawnings of jealousy can be seen in the male's claim to sole possession of the female ; while his habit of protecting her points to the development of the nobler instincts which have brightened the later stages of the race. Full of promise also is the long association between male and female and the long dependence of the young. They furnish the first faint glimmerings of the family tie, hardly yet discernible in the brute conditions of the time, but destined to afford the most fruitful source of human happiness, and the foundation of all his institutions.

CHAPTER III

THE FAMILY

HOW long the man-animal roamed the earth in this savage state cannot be known with any degree of certainty. His progress was undoubtedly slow. It has been estimated from the strata in which human remains have been discovered that, from the time when man used the edge of a broken flint as a tool to that later time when he had come to chipping the flint into convenient shape, a period of one hundred and fifty thousand years elapsed. If this is anywhere near the truth we may form some idea of the microscopic advance in his mental powers from century to century. For countless generations he wandered, more animal than man. His unsocial and solitary habits formed one of the greatest obstacles to his mental progress. He fed doubtless on fruits and the small animals he could capture in the chase; and the hunting instinct which this mode of life through innumerable generations implanted in him is strong in the ordinary man to-day, although its necessity as a source of food has long since disappeared. The fox-hunter, the sportsman who follows the tame deer, the wealthy man who resorts to the

moors in the season, no less than the boy who throws his stones at a sparrow, are but exemplifying in their own persons the persistence with which these instincts acquired in a barbarous age maintain their influence in the face of all the forces of civilisation. This fact may well be borne in mind by those who dream of making men good by an Act of Parliament.

Functional memory is that quality of living matter owing to which past impressions or experiences tend to be repeated. Such experiences become indeed inherent in the matter itself, as inseparable from it as its colour, weight or consistency. This attribute of living matter, always liable to modification as external conditions change, is analogous to certain characteristics of non-living matter. All chemical bodies have as part of their essential qualities the power to undergo certain changes, or exhibit certain phenomena under suitable conditions. *E.g.* oxygen, when associated in a certain way with hydrogen, produces water. This power is inherent in the chemical substance we know as oxygen. It has what we may call an "inorganic memory," as a consequence of which it repeats certain experiences under identical conditions. Just as the inorganic body possesses this power of repeating a past experience—as we say, it shows certain characteristic chemical reactions — so living matter has an analogous power, with one important difference. In the former the phenomena exhibited are unchanging; while in the latter,

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owing to its inherent power of internal adjustment to changing external conditions, the experiences repeated are not invariable, but are liable to modification in accordance with such internal adjustments. We find here an explanation of the phenomenon that a minute cell under proper conditions develops into an organism similar to the organism from which it was derived. This power of development, of exhibiting characteristic changes under certain conditions, is an essential quality of the living matter; and the growth of the cell thus presents itself as a process analogous in nature to, though differing in degree from, the chemical reactions peculiar to inorganic bodies. It is desirable to dwell upon this fact in this place, because the persistence of the early acquired hunting instinct, long after its necessity has disappeared, indicates that the habits of the organism as well as its internal structure become inherent characteristics of the living matter of which it is composed. Habits so ingrained in the very life matter of the organism and reproduced in successive generations are called instincts. The root qualities of living matter sufficiently explain their origin and persistence, and enable us to understand why even in civilised man instincts are so much more powerful than reason, and can only be modified by slow degrees. The vast importance of this fact will become apparent when we consider the social conditions of the present day, and the possibility of their amelioration.

Increase in the population, which in these later days is found to be closely associated with so many social evils, was the main cause of man's ascent in those distant times when the man-animal lived his day. The species which is best adapted to the conditions of the time, which is better fitted than competing species to secure food, will in the ordinary course of events tend to increase in numbers until it reaches the limit of the food supply. The man-animal was no exception to the rule. The increase was no doubt slow in view of his mode of life, and the powerful animals that continually threatened his existence. But it was sure. Thus it happened that in course of time he could no longer roam the world in solitude. Increasing numbers made it inevitable that he should come more and more frequently into contact with others of his kind. Instinct led him to avoid such meeting where possible; but necessity compelled. Changing external conditions result in modifications in the character, or internal adjustments, of the organism. By degrees man grew accustomed to the neighbourhood of his fellows; and the instinct to avoid them became slowly weaker as his new circumstances forced upon him new habits of life.

The most important of the early effects of this growth in the numbers of the species was no doubt the strengthening of the family tie. At the time when primitive men were few in number, while the world was wide and food abundant, the offspring on reaching maturity set out in search

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of food on their own accounts, and with an almost unlimited world before them soon became as strangers to their parents. When, however, it was no longer possible to find fresh fields and pastures new, free from the neighbourhood of their fellows, it is but natural to suppose that the young when mature would remain in the neighbourhood of their parents rather than resort to the more dangerous neighbourhood of strangers. On the other hand, the parents might be supposed to regard with more tolerance the neighbourhood of their own offspring, so long dependent on them, than the presence of strangers. Thus by degrees the bond between parent and child, which had hitherto been snapped when the latter reached maturity, was maintained to some extent in after years. Family life in the better sense of the term, involving some measure of co-operation between the mature members of the family, and some degree of self-sacrifice by each in the interests of the others, could only come when the mental powers of the race had made considerable advance; but this growing association between the members of the same family, under the pressure of necessity, paved the way for that fuller and higher development. The very anti-social instincts of the creature must have promoted this end. In the constant hunt for food, collision between the hunters inevitably grew more frequent as their numbers increased; and it is easy to believe that the family tie, such as it was, would have led the members of a family to take sides

against intruders. Such a variation offered special advantages in the struggle for existence ; and accordingly became in time a permanent characteristic of the species. The family tended thus to be cemented both by attraction from within and by pressure from without. The dividing line between members of the same family and outsiders was more sharply defined, a process that has found a significant counterpart in the later evolution of tribes and nations.

The most important phase in the evolution of the man-animal was that which concerned his mental faculties. The vast complexity of modern life, the wonders of human achievements, the height to which man has risen—as also the depth to which he has sunk—are bound up in the development of his brain as the organ of sense. Man is distinguished from other animals in this respect. He has been aptly referred to as a freak of nature, an animal run-to-brain. The vast difference between his own mental powers and those of the nearest of other animals is indeed so great as to appear at first sight a difference in kind rather than one of degree. In tracing the evolution of man's complex nature and highly organised social condition from that simple and primitive state of life which we have hitherto considered, it is necessary to bring this, the highest of his faculties, into line with his purely physical features ; and to show that his psychical powers are evolved like his physical powers from that

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original living matter under the influence of its inherent qualities.

The stage that marked man's advance from the individual isolation of the man-animal to the association of the family was that in which the evolution of the mental faculties first differentiated the man from the rest of the animal world in a marked degree. He began this stage as an animal. He ended it as a man—low indeed in the scale, but still distinctly human in his peculiar characteristics.

Functional memory is one of the essential qualities of all living matter. This memory is the non-conscious power of retaining the impression of past experiences, and a tendency to repeat them. In the vegetative form of organic life such memory finds its simplest expression. It concerns the repetition of the structure of the organism, and its passive power of incorporating such food as chance brings within its reach. As it has no power to change its environment by self-motion or by adaptation in any way, so it has no sense organs conveying to it information as to that environment. Having no sense organs, it has no central sense organ or brain ; and is therefore incapable of that condition we call consciousness. The memory of the plant, so far as its functions are concerned, is thus of the lowest kind, hardly distinguishable in its stage of development from that of the primal living matter.

In the case of the highly developed animal

organism a more interesting state appears. Their most striking feature is the brain—the central sense organ. In man this organ has developed in an extraordinary way ; and as it plays an all-important part in his affairs to-day it is desirable to sketch briefly the course of its evolution, and to show how its characteristic qualities are derived from the root qualities of living matter.

We have seen how in the early stages of evolution the homogeneous cell group developed a certain organic structure in which certain parts of the group performed specific functions. These functions were concerned with the preservation of the organism. The preservation of the organism depended upon its environment ; and as it progressed beyond the purely vegetative stage, and, as the result of locomotion, was subjected to more numerous and frequent changes of environment, the continued existence of the organism depended largely on its selection of suitable surroundings. Certain organs consequently developed whose function was to convey to the organism information as to the character of its environment. The sense organs formed the channels of this communication ; and an impression conveyed by such organs was followed by the exercise of certain other functions (as locomotion) of such a character as the preservation of the organism required. The sense faculty existed, primitive in character, before any central sense organ appeared. In this early period, however, certain impressions from without were followed by

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certain activities within the organism. This joint experience in due course became ingrained in the functional memory of the organism. Further, in the process of division of labour which marked organic evolution, specific functions became identified with specific organs. In this way the brain appeared as the organ whose specific function was to connect the organs of sense with the active organs of locomotion, etc., and the functional memory of these joint experiences became in a special way a quality of the matter of which the brain organ was composed. Functional memory is that quality of living matter under whose influence such matter tends to repeat past experiences. In the case of the brain an impression conveyed to it by the senses (part of the joint experience above mentioned) was followed by a repetition of the remainder of that joint experience. In the earlier stages of the brain's development, before it had acquired the faculty of consciousness, a great number of such compound experiences must have become ingrained in it. Every relation between the organism and the outside world was followed by certain definite activities within the organism ; but diverse as these movements were they were essentially automatic, the brain serving merely as the organ by which the functions of sense and movement were connected. In the lower forms of organic life possessing central sense organs the function of the brain has probably not developed in any appreciable degree beyond this automatic

stage ; and their whole actions, complex as some of them may be (as in the case of fishes) are directed for the most part in this way. Such non-conscious, but apparently purposive, actions we call "instincts" ; and this faculty which characterised the whole activities of the primitive brain remains not less certainly a quality of the most highly developed brain. Indeed, a moment's consideration will show each of us what a great proportion of his activities are of this non-conscious, instinctive character ; and there can be no doubt that the primitive man whose state we have been considering was infinitely more subject to it.

The next stage in the brain's advance was the acquisition of that faculty we call consciousness. This is a quality it derived directly from the stage above described. As already pointed out, in the functional memory of the brain are recorded various past experiences of such a character that a stimulus to the brain in the shape of an impression from outside revives the record of past action in the functional memory of the brain, which thereupon repeats its past experience by communicating certain impulses to the motor organs of the body. In the primitive brain its recorded experience is confined to the latter operation ; and its special condition is only revived by an impression from a source external to and independent of the brain itself. In course of time, however, the actual receipt of the impression becomes itself a recorded experience in the functional memory, liable to be revived under

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suitable conditions. The simplest condition under which such revival takes place is the receipt of a new and similar impression from outside. Such new impression not only tends to be followed by some specific action (the primitive automatic action of instinct as above described), but tends also to revive in the functional memory the recorded experience of the earlier impression. The condition of consciousness (not self-consciousness) is that in which a new impression from outside is accompanied by the revival in the functional memory of a similar past impression. Moreover, as before indicated, an impression conveyed to the brain tends to be followed by certain habitual impressions or states under the influence of functional memory, and therefore to recreate the conditions which existed at the time of a similar compound impression. Each impression accordingly tends to produce the state of consciousness. Consciousness being a condition, and it being impossible for any individual part of the brain matter to be in two distinct conditions at the same moment, the brain that is as yet a single sense centre can only be conscious of one impression at a time. We may trace this even in the highly complex brain of man. Innumerable impressions are being constantly conveyed to the brain by the senses ; but most of them fail to enter the field of consciousness. We need but think of the varied impressions received by the eye, and of the solitary one which emerges into consciousness, or of the many sounds that fall

upon the ear, and of which we remain unconscious while any other impression occupies the field, to perceive what is meant by consciousness as the conjunction of a present impression and of a past compound impression.

There is no sharp line of distinction between the instinctive and the conscious states, the second being a mere development of the first. In the earliest stage of consciousness the new impression revives only those old impressions which are identical in character with it ; and does so with difficulty and obscurely. As the faculty of consciousness develops and strengthens it recalls old impressions with celerity (almost instantaneously in the higher types), and revives not only identical but similar impressions (those having one or more features in common with itself) ; while in a still more advanced stage the single new impression revives a number of similar past impressions. When this point is reached the brain has acquired a primitive power of reasoning ; and we may learn from this the extent to which animals can reason. The earliest impressions, *i.e.* the first communications which reach an organism through the senses, are concerned solely with its self-preservation, and are such as are followed by definite action on the part of the motor organs. It results that the primitive conscious state is concerned with such impressions, as is also the early power of reviving multiple impressions which marks the beginning of reasoning. This is the stage that the higher animals have reached—some

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more, some less. Their reasoning is in the main confined to those impressions which concern their self-preservation, and which are habitually followed by definite action. A certain external stimulus revives in the field of consciousness a number of past impressions and experiences ; and the action of the animal is determined by the most vivid or most powerful of such impressions. The mental operation is identical with reason in man, though inferior in range. An illustration may perhaps make the point clear, and enable us to distinguish between the reason of animals and the instinct of fishes. A kitten was observed sitting on a table inside a closed window when a bird perched on the sill. The sight of the bird was followed by an instinctive action on the part of the animal. It sprang at the bird, came into contact with the glass of the window, and received an unpleasant shock. On a similar occasion the sight of the bird through the glass recalled two past experiences, the pleasure of devouring the bird, and the pain inflicted by the glass. The latter was evidently the more vivid impression, and the cat did not jump. The different actions of the animal under identical conditions indicate the operation of a primitive reason (in the field of consciousness, not in the field of self-consciousness). It is also recorded that a pike, placed in a tank with some small fish but separated from them by a sheet of glass, dashed at them and suffered a severe blow from the obstacle. In spite of that experience, it continued to dash at its prey until the repeated

shocks of the glass had well-nigh stunned it. The incident illustrates the difference between the instinct of the fish, and the primitive reasoning of the animal. It may be added that on an occasion somewhat similar to the first of the above incidents, a dog turned and went directly to the door of the room, the only means by which he could circumvent the obstacle of the window. We have here in the fish, the cat and the dog, three distinct stages in the mental advance of the higher organisms ; each stage, however, evolving directly from the stage next below. In the first, memory revives but the simple impression, one immediately affecting the self-preservation of the organism ; action being determined or controlled entirely by that simple impression. In the second instance, the more developed brain is capable of recalling two impressions, and action or inaction is determined by the more powerful of those two impressions. In the third case, the still more developed brain can recall more than two impressions, the consequent action appearing more rational, more the result of deliberate choice, than in either of the others. Human reason is but a further development of the same thing. As the power of the sense organs increase, they convey to the brain, the central sense organ, impressions of external matters not directly affecting the existence of the organism itself. In course of time these new impressions become liable to revival in the field of consciousness. The human being of to-day accordingly possesses in his

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functional memory a vast variety of impressions, simple and compound, embracing all the phenomena of the external world which his senses are capable of communicating to him. He not only has this greater fund to draw upon, but a stimulus of any kind revives past impressions more speedily and in much greater variety than is the case with lower organisms. "Thought" is this process of revival under the influence of some present impression or stimulus; and the thinking power of a man depends upon the number and clearness of the past impressions, and the ease with which they rise into the field of consciousness.

Reason is a higher phase of the same process. Past impressions are great in variety and complexity—each compound impression being the combination of a number of simple impressions. To each new simple impression memory will provide numbers of compound impressions, of which this new simple impression is part. The brain is then said to "think" about the new simple impression. The new impression may, however, be compound, consisting of two or more simple impressions whose general relations—or whose appropriate compound impression—is the object of thought. The process of reason is merely the consciousness of these past impressions, and the retention in the field of consciousness of those past impressions containing any of the new impressions which are the object of thought. The best reasoner is therefore he whose memory possesses the greatest store of past impressions,

with whom new impressions most readily cause those past impressions to rise into the field of consciousness, and whose brain is quickest to select the most appropriate of those past impressions.

It would be foreign to the scope of this work to pursue this point in any greater detail. It is sufficient for the present purpose to indicate how the mental state we call consciousness, and the faculty of thought and reason, evolved from lower types under the impulse of those fundamental qualities inherent in living matter.

From consciousness we proceed to self-consciousness. It is a function of the more highly evolved brain, and its origin and nature may be indicated briefly.

Among the earlier experiences of the conscious organism is the fact that its own body is related to itself in a peculiarly intimate way. The existence and nature of the external organs are conveyed to the brain by the various organs of sense. Thus the brain learns through the organ of vision and the sense of touch that the foot of the animal is associated inseparably with the rest of the organism, and that all the experiences of that foot are conveyed to the brain. These accumulating experiences, under the influence of conscious memory, create the sense or consciousness that the foot and other organs are dissociated from the external world, and are inseparably associated with the organism itself. We have here the beginning of self-consciousness. The condition of consciousness is itself an experience

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of the brain, and becomes a part of the brain's memory as the result of repetition. Self-consciousness results from this. It is the "consciousness" of the organism of its own functions. Just as it comes in time to distinguish a foot as its own, so it comes to distinguish the function of consciousness as its own. It is no doubt the experience of all that the limbs and the body seem in some peculiar way to be outside our real selves ; the reason is that their existence is conveyed to the brain by the organs of sense, while the existence of the function of consciousness is conveyed to the brain by the influence of functional memory only.

From this brief survey of the evolution of the mind we may recognise that the highest is evolved from the lowest by slow and imperceptible degrees ; that sub-consciousness, consciousness and self-consciousness are not three distinct and sharply defined states, but arise one from the other. It may also be noticed that in the lowest forms of life, where consciousness has not developed, action under the influence of functional memory is entirely automatic or instinctive. Where development has not passed the stage of consciousness, it is mainly instinctive, and in a limited degree rational ; while in the field of self-consciousness it is purely rational. It may further be observed that the rational is developed from the instinctive, and covers but a small portion of the field of action. In man himself, most of his actions are still instinctive, and very few rational,

i.e. consequent on the mental process of reasoning. This fact is of the highest significance in considering human problems, and the obstacles in the way of "reform" (change in some specific direction or towards some determinate end). It explains why masses of men can rarely be moved by an appeal to reason, but are easily stirred through their instincts or emotions. It throws light on the apathy and indifference of oppressed peoples. It will, however, be necessary to recur to this later on, and for the present nothing more need be said.

It has been desirable to make this brief excursion into the history of the human mind, as without it the evolution of man and his institutions could not be understood. It is sufficient for our present purpose merely to suggest this process of mental evolution, and to show in the fewest possible words that man both in mind and body is descended from lower types, and that the influences under which these wonderful changes occur are bound up in the four root characteristics of simple living matter.

The stage of man's progress from the individual to the family, described in this chapter, marks a great development in his faculty of consciousness, and the birth of self-consciousness and reason. The latter are of course in a very low stage, lower than the lowest savages to-day ; and in regarding self-consciousness and reason as special attributes of the man at the time to which we refer it is important to distinguish them from the more highly evolved faculties of the modern human mind.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY HUMAN GROUP

WE have reached the first of our human ancestors. During an inconceivable period of time these slow changes have taken place, until there emerges from the obscurity an animal having characteristics distinctly human. His shape, structure, functions—all mark him out as a human being, the highest type of organism that had yet appeared on the earth. Yet how vast the abyss between him and the modern man!

The problems of humanity in this its earliest stage are very simple in kind; and yet, in their essential features, they are with us to-day. The first man was not tortured with religious difficulties; he was not vexed by political changes. Social problems had not yet risen above his horizon. In the then low stage of mental development, he was capable of little more than instinctive action. The age of thought and reason had barely dawned. His whole life was dominated by those primal instincts that had marked his predecessors — self-maintenance, acquisition of food, avoidance of danger, and the exercise of his sexual functions. The problems of humanity were summed up in these.

It was an age of individualism in all its naked simplicity.

We may imagine that wretched forerunner of our race, wandering through the dense forests or over the rolling plains. For food he trusted to such animals as he could secure, and to fruits and other vegetable products. Naked and homeless, he dragged with him the female, and such offspring as managed to survive their hard condition. Many dangers surrounded him in the shape of huge beasts and reptiles as bent on the search for food as he himself. Safety depended upon his powers of speed or concealment, or upon his skill with the stones or branches that formed his only tools and weapons. Life must have been short in those times. Hunger dogged his footsteps, and provoked many a bloody collision with others of his kind. Between him and his fellow humans there had existed no feeling but indifference in times of satiety, fear and hatred in time of want. The deep-rooted suspicion and distrust of strangers and foreigners that is so marked a feature of the race to-day is a legacy of those distant times.

Those first faint suggestions of family life described in the last chapter had but little influence on this state of mutual antagonism. Family affection as between the parents and their mature offspring was of a negative character, and went no farther than mutual tolerance. No positive bond, no sense of duty, no impulse to self-sacrifice yet existed. As an instance of the negative character of the family tie at a much

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later stage of evolution Darwin describes the meeting of a Fuegian with his brothers after an absence of some years. Hearing of the arrival the native brothers came to see him. At the meeting no sign of affection was displayed. They stood and stared at the newcomer for some minutes. One then went off to attend to his canoe as though nothing had happened; while the other proceeded to steal what he could of his newfound brother's property. Some idea may be obtained from this of the very weak nature of the bond between members of the family at the time of our early ancestor. In its practical effects at the moment it did not influence in any way the purely individualistic or self-regarding character of the man. He merely exercised that self-regard in a somewhat changed environment. The appearance of another did not as before provoke at once his fear and hostility. He could now bear the sight of the mature members of his own family, whether his grown-up children or his brothers, with a certain equanimity. No doubt the old feeling was easily aroused, but it was latent in normal circumstances; and this fact presents the first distinct advance of man as a social animal.

It has been shown that in the case of the physical structure of an organism, a variation useful to the life of the organism tends to be repeated and to become a permanent part of succeeding organisms; and that in the case of the brain, the central sense organ, new impressions, by repetition, become ingrained in its functional memory. So

in the case of our primitive man the neighbourhood of others, growing from an occasional incident to an habitual condition, became embodied in the character of the individual. This modification in the character of individuals was an advantageous variation from the point of view of self-preservation, and this semi-social disposition became a permanent feature of later generations. It received an additional impetus from the fact that the diminished hostility of man towards his neighbours removed one of the dangers to existence, and thus brought about an increase of the population in that neutral zone. It may naturally be supposed that this growth in numbers, and the improved security, tended to restrict the area of their wanderings. As a consequence of this diminished migration, families became more or less attached to certain districts; and such places came in time to be inhabited by people connected by blood or by long association. The passive toleration that had grown up between members of the same family extended in this way till it embraced all who habitually lived in one locality.

We have not yet reached a human society.

A society is an organism whose parts are inter-related in respect of the work each does, whose units exhibit a certain division of labour to some common end. We have so far reached merely a group. The occasion recalls the earliest stage of organic evolution, where the individual cells first acquired the habit of living in groups of

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otherwise independent units. These groups later developed into primitive organisms ; and these in their turn led to organisms of a higher type. So in the case of our early man the unit has evolved into the group. The individuals are quite independent. Each seeks his food as before, mates and brings up his offspring as before. They have no property, no leader, no classes, no organisation of any kind. They continue to hunt and maintain themselves in the neighbourhood of the others. Their instinctive hostility to their kind has become passive (though easily excited) so far as the other members of the group are concerned ; but remains as active as ever with strangers to whose society use has not habituated them. This condition has been reached by many, probably most, animals at the present time ; while in some cases, as with bees and ants, the group has evolved into a real society.

The process by which the human group developed into the human society was identical in all its essential features with that which marked the evolution of the primitive organism from the cell group. Variations in the condition of the group induced by the accidents of its environment became ingrained in the functional memory of the living matter of which the group was composed, and became permanent characteristics of that matter. Where such variations were beneficial, that is where as a consequence of such variations the group concerned was advantageously placed as regards the acquisition of food, such

variations became a permanent feature of a rapidly growing number of groups. Division of labour was the most beneficial of all variations ; and the group became an organism as that accidental variation became a permanent condition.

In the case of the early human group there were many factors tending constantly to a division of labour, or at least a co-operation in certain matters on which the existence of the individuals depended. For example, each one at first hunted on his own account. In times of scarcity, however; when game was less abundant, necessity must have compelled the hunters to share the produce of the chase. In the earlier days of normal hostility they would have fought for it ; but in the new condition of normal tolerance members of the same group naturally shared the spoil each had been more or less concerned in securing.

It is but a short step from this mutual action in times of special need to mutual action on other occasions whether in hunting game or resisting the attacks of animals. Here again the variation in conduct (the mutual instead of individual action) induced by the accident of environment, being beneficial to the individual, became in time a habit, and from that an instinct, in that particular race. The process was aided by natural selection, inasmuch as those most addicted to this habit came off best in the general struggle for existence, and left more numerous offspring to perpetuate that special characteristic.

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The group of indifferent units grew in the slow course of time to a group whose members were habitually interested in, or concerned with, the affairs of each other. They were not as yet a society—they had merely acquired the habit, more or less frequently practised, of common action in securing food. Nevertheless the social instinct (the inherent quality or disposition which distinguishes the members of an organic society from those of a mere group) was born. Its growth was thenceforth the great factor in the advance of humanity from barbarism to civilisation; as it will likewise be in the progress from the civilisation of to-day to the loftier heights that the race may attain in the future. The primary instinct of self-regard and this secondary characteristic of other-regard (the social instinct) are now permanent elements in all human problems. They form the centrifugal and the centripetal forces which maintain the comparative equilibrium of the social machine; and the character of that system cannot safely be altered without due consideration to these important elements.

The general circumstances of the human being while the development of the group was in process may be indicated briefly. Food consisted of what may be called the spontaneous products of nature, whether in the animal or vegetable world. The individual lived a hand to mouth existence. His mental development being at too low a stage to permit of the exercise of the foresight and patience

which agriculture requires, he hunted for food when hungry, and did little but sleep in the intervals. He was free, in so far as he had unrestricted access to the means of subsistence. Private property in land not having yet been invented, our ancestor had all the world before him where to choose. Unemployment, the destitution of a part of the group while the remainder enjoyed abundance, was an inconceivable experience. That most difficult and important of modern problems summed up in the word unemployment—the existence of a considerable body of individuals willing to work to obtain food but unable to find an opportunity of working—could not appear in that early period where the land (the spontaneous products of nature) was open to all, while each was free to go forth in pursuit of food whenever hunger impelled. Our early man enjoyed a complete liberty, such as animals enjoy—a liberty to kill and be killed. He knew no law but that of brute force, checked in a slight degree by the growing intimacy between himself and the others in his group. Even in the group brute force was the only arbiter of disputes. However, except in sexual rivalry, there was little occasion to appeal to that savage instinct while food was sufficient; but times of scarcity and times of danger revived it in full vigour, and the weakest went to the wall. The position of the female was degraded in the extreme. She was weaker than the male; and at a time when none but

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purely self-regarding impulses directed the action of the individual she suffered all the hardships incident to her sex and her relative weakness. Later on, the male developed some instinct of duty towards the female ; but that time was as yet far distant.

The relations between different groups were marked by permanent hostility. Where search for food brought them into collision the spoils were to the strong, and death or flight the only alternatives to the weak.

For the rest it is sufficient to say that mental development was as yet in its lowest stage. The mind of the man was concerned solely with the satisfaction of his primal wants, and was incapable of any consecutive thought, or of any but the simplest processes of reasoning. Except that his faculty of conscious memory was greater than existed elsewhere in the animal world, giving him definite advantage in the struggle for existence, it would have been difficult to distinguish him from his nearest relations among animals. The absence of any power of imagination—the conception of things in relations other than those in which he had been accustomed to see them—was the great obstacle in the way of his advance. It left him void of any inventive faculty. He could not by the mere operation of his mind learn how his condition might be improved and life made more secure. Such improvements as he did effect were the result of accident, maintained and perpetuated by the aid

of memory. Lack of imagination left him untouched by any sense of revolt against his condition, and rendered him incapable of contrasting his existing state with an ideal better state. His relations with his offspring, the female, the fellow members of the group, were essentially instinctive, as were his methods of securing food and of performing the other exercises that self-preservation dictated. Repeated experience had incorporated these in the functional memory of his brain; and his conduct in the various circumstances of his life was directed in the main by these instincts or ingrained habits. New experiences, new conditions, the operation of reason, might in time modify those instincts; but as they were formed in the first place under the compulsion of necessity, so nothing short of necessity could uproot them.

The truth of this is peculiarly manifested in the relations between man and woman to-day. In that remote past when the only criterion was that of brute strength man found himself "superior" to woman. As the weaker, she was compelled to do his bidding. He tyrannised over her, regarded her as altogether his inferior; and even when in later times he came to reason with man as his equal he continued to decide disputes between himself and the woman by brute force alone. This same instinctive feeling of superiority is one of the most wide-spread characters of civilised man to-day. Among the uneducated, male superiority is taken as a matter of course, and the

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suggestion that man and woman should have an equal voice in the affairs of the community provokes his scorn and often his violence. It is, too, a common thing to find educated men admitting that all the force of reason is in favour of that equality, but that, somehow or other, the idea is repugnant to them. Woman's early condition as the mere property of the man is still recalled in the marriage service of the Church where she is enjoined to obey him; and the feelings of the newly married man towards his wife are more those of the tender and benign owner than of the free and equal companion. Just as man acquired the feeling of superiority, so the woman acquired an instinct of submission to the stronger man, and a sense of inferiority, of unfitness to take part in the affairs with which the man concerned himself. That feeling also exists in a marked degree at the present time, and may be seen on all sides in both domestic and political affairs. No better instance could be found of the way in which an habitual condition becomes, through the influence of functional memory, part of the very life principle of the organism.

The unorganised group developed slowly into the organised society. There is little doubt that tens of thousands of years must have elapsed before a definitely organised society of the simplest kind came into existence. It is not necessary to dwell upon the process by which the change was effected. That process corresponded in every essential feature with the

process by which the first simple organism developed from the cell-group under the influence of the fourfold vital principle described in the first chapter. An organism is a group in which the units are definitely related. Its most essential feature is a division of labour, the processes necessary to maintain life being divided in a greater or less degree between the various units. As in the simple organism, so in the organised society. The latter is distinguished from the human group solely by this division of labour, and the modification in character incident to it. These new characteristics both of the group and the individual were, in the lowest stage of development, solely the result of accumulated experiences. In hunting, two of the group happened to pursue the same quarry, and succeeded in the chase more easily than if alone. That fortunate accident was repeated; and in course of time it became habitual to hunt in company. In the same way it happened that in a collision between members of different groups two of the same group attacked a single enemy. Mutual assistance in war grew in time into a regular practice, as had mutual assistance in the chase. In this way co-operation spread in the various concerns in which co-operation was advantageous. The old feeling of tolerance which had alone connected the members of the group was strengthened by this new bond. Hunting together meant feeding together. Feeding together meant living together. Warring to-

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gether meant running risks in the common interest, risks that incidentally resulted in the death of the individual. All these things tended to weld the group into a whole, to unite the members by a sense of common interests as against all outside that group. Food was provided more efficiently, and distributed more equally. Safety from attack was better secured. Common pursuit of food—common defence from attack—joint occupation of a particular locality! The characteristic features of a society were slowly emerging. Co-operation in a common work had been reached—not yet real division of labour. The social organism was homogeneous in character—an interrelated group of similar units. Like the first simple organism it had not yet developed structure.

Meanwhile the mental capacity of the race was advancing. Conscious thought connected with the simple incidents of their daily lives found a place among their newly acquired qualities—simple, no doubt, but still distinguishable from the purely instinctive character of their predecessors. As this power increased dim shadows of rational thought began to flit across their minds, bringing a new and powerful instrument in the improvement of the race. Stones had been man's earliest tools and weapons. Later he used the jagged edge of broken flints. Later still he broke the flints themselves to produce the jagged edge. Now he chipped the flints and made a pointed instrument—a conscious and deliberate adaptation

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of means to ends which marked the beginning of the age of reason, and differentiated the man finally and completely from the animal.

The habit of co-operation in the ordinary affairs of life had a stimulating effect on the mental advance of the race. The closer intimacy that existed between the members of the group, the freer exchange of their simple views on the incidents and events which filled their days, made the experience of all the property of each. The mind of the individual became the storehouse of a greater diversity of facts than could be the case with the solitary wanderer of earlier times ; while at the same time those facts rose with greater readiness and in greater variety into the field of conscious thought as occasion demanded. In other words, the faculty of reason found in this widening field of co-operation congenial soil. Its development created an ever broadening gulf between man and the rest of the animal world ; and rapidly led to his dominion over it. In another way, too, the habit of co-operation was beneficial to man. In the few simple operations that occupied his life—hunting, fishing, defence from enemies or shelter from the weather—little improvements in method must have presented themselves from time to time as the result of accidental circumstances. In the case of the isolated individual these would for the most part pass unnoticed ; and even where he happened to notice and repeat them the advantage rested with him and died with him. Now, however, that

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men were more closely associated these incidents escaped notice less easily ; and, when observed, quickly became known to all, and so a permanent possession of the race. Under these more favourable circumstances, aided by the growing mental power of man, his more acute observation and more retentive memory, improvements in the material condition of the race quickly appeared. Instruments of the chase and of war—primitive bows and arrows, spears, slings, etc.—were invented ; while rude shelters of skins or boughs took the place of the casual rock or cave, the earlier man had known. The acquisition of tools—instruments prepared by human labour and adapted to certain specific ends—however simple in character, not only marked an enormous advance in the mental and physical state of man, the event was specially significant and important inasmuch as it introduced the age of property (the exclusive possession by an individual of some object of utility)—after all, the fundamental characteristic of modern society, and the root of its good and evil qualities.

The group has by this time become more closely welded together. Accidental co-operation has given place to habitual co-operation ; while a simple division of labour and a primitive organisation of the common affairs of the people has changed the mere group into a society.

We may then proceed to consider the primitive society when it has definitely emerged as a tool-making, tool-using and tool-owning community.

CHAPTER V

THE TRIBE—HUNTING STAGE

IN tracing the evolution of the social organism from the earlier group we find a recurrence of the phenomena that marked the evolution of the first organic bodies. The simple cell is followed by the unorganised group in every instance. It is an inevitable link between the cell and the organism. The character of the simplest organism as evolved directly from the group is also uniform throughout the world of organisms. When, however, the simple organism begins to develop structure as a consequence of accidental variations which happen to be advantageous in the special circumstances in which the organism is placed, uniformity disappears. Variations of quite different kinds become perpetuated in different organisms; and the first simple organisms are followed by others more highly developed in structure and functions, and of various types. These in their turn are the forerunners of further diverse types; until at length the world is covered by an infinite variety of organisms all related by common descent from the first simple organism, but differing between themselves in the widest possible way. In this vast genealogical tree the

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seed stands as the simple cell, the trunk as the group and the first simple organism, the great branches as the first distinct structures, and the countless twigs as the innumerable diverse organisms we find in nature to-day.

The same process fronts us in the evolution of societies. The isolated individual was followed by the group, presenting the same features wherever it occurred. To this succeeded the first simple society, also uniform in character. But from this time uniformity disappeared. The diverse conditions under which the simple societies existed, and the varied accidents which tended to modify their characters, gave rise to an increasing diversity in social structures. We accordingly find to-day numerous distinct types of societies peopling the earth, some more closely related than others, but all descended from the common ancestor.

In following the evolution of the European type of society, and in tracing the origin of its special problems, it will not be necessary to pursue the various ramifications of these other species of social organisms. It will be sufficient to indicate their general structure as accounting for the difference in the inner problems of each. That course will enable us to estimate more exactly the root causes of those problems which are characteristic of our own society.

The first real society was marked by a system of division of labour among its members. The co-operation that had previously existed between

them was merely the common pursuit of common objects. All hunted or made war. There was no allocation of specific duties to specific individuals. This new feature now put in an appearance. It was the direct outcome of the previous condition. Co-operation led naturally enough to greater efficiency. Food was obtained more easily and abundantly where all hunted in common than where each went his own way. One result of that greater efficiency was that the time and energies of the members of the community were no longer occupied in so great a degree in the necessary quest for food. It was sufficient if a part of the members of the society went hunting. The remainder stayed behind, and engaged in other pursuits. As collision between societies increased with their growing numbers it doubtless became more necessary than before to keep a constant watch for dangerous intruders ; and this duty fell naturally to those who had not gone on the hunt. In the same way the women, less fitted for war and the chase, became the preparers of food and the "general servants" of the home.

This division of labour had several important results. The men, devoted to the active life of the hunter, acquired in time under the influence of long repeated experiences a "function" for hunting. It became part of their permanent character, and they turned instinctively to hunting and as instinctively from those occupations in which they had ceased to share. In the same way the women acquired an instinctive bent for

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home duties as their appropriate sphere. The physical gap between man and woman widened, while their characters became modified accordingly. The man from his mode of life acquired strength and endurance under violent exercise, decision and self-reliance, activity and energy in the field and idleness at home. The woman became less self-reliant as she grew more used to depending on the man for food and for safety from attack. She acquired the patience and the power of quiet endurance which mark her sex to-day. She became the home drudge; and in that age of crude barbarism the woman sank still further into the position of a slave. It is significant to note that as she became more confined to home duties, and lost her natural access to the means of subsistence, so did she lose her liberty. She became an economic slave, just as the mass of people to-day are economic slaves, by being deprived of the opportunity of carrying on what Spencer calls "life-sustaining activities." In woman's position of economic dependence in this primitive society we find perhaps the first glimpse of that most difficult of modern problems of which sweating and unemployment are but manifestations.

The greater leisure the members of the society enjoyed was the occasion of a more rapid mental development. It gave opportunity for practising the arts of the chase, and no doubt by directing attention to the means rather than to the end of success in the hunt aided the introduction of

improved tools. The sling gave way to the arrow. The pointed stake became a headed spear. The use of these improved tools requiring some degree of skill in manufacture occasioned a further division of labour. The skilful maker of arrows acquired value for his special ability. The weapons of his make were prized above others: and by degrees he came to devote his time more particularly to that special art.

At present the organism of the society does not go beyond this simple division of labour. The pressure of events has not yet produced anything in the shape of chiefs or classes. All men are equal in the community so far as directing power is concerned. The social bond between them is still little more than instinctive habit. The principle of self-maintenance, however, will soon, under growing pressure from without, develop structure in the social organism, and bring into existence chiefs and subjects with all their complex relations. The existence of a social organism, however simple, implies certain normal relations both between the units in the society and between the society itself and other societies. In the stage we have now reached those relations are normal hostility between societies, and normal tolerance between the members of the same society. In the latter instance, however, disputes between members are still settled in the old way by physical violence. No idea of justice, of the interference of a third

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party in the adjustment of disputes, yet exists. We shall find this purely individualistic appeal to force survive in the shape of the ordeal of battle to within recent times, and in the shape of the duel to this very day.

Submission to a chief requires some degree of mental power, of imagination, of the capacity to perceive the necessity of co-operation as distinct from the mere instinct or habit of co-operation. The normal mind had not yet reached this stage ; nor had mankind acquired the power of reasoning, of perceiving the connection between cause and effect, of seeking the cause of a perceived effect. Man had not yet reached a sufficiently advanced stage to acquire any sense of religion, a stage which demanded some degree of imaginative power, and some measure of reason. Mental evolution was, however, steadily progressing ; and these new complications in human affairs were already in sight.

Still, as in the past, the whole of this wonderful change is due to the effect of the vital qualities which distinguished the first living matter. The root motive of the human being is still that primeval impulse to self-maintenance, overshadowing all the secondary characteristics he has acquired. Like the simple cell, his development is due to his vital power of retaining impressions, of repeating past experiences, and of handing them on to his posterity. The evolution of human society and of the human being requires —no more and no less—the same vital principle

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that led to the development of the first simple cell into the first simple organism.

Let us take a step forward, and observe the circumstances of human society at a more developed stage.

We have now to note that the social organism is developing in different directions, and producing widely different types. The direction of this development is due to accidental variation and differences of environment. Mental development is as yet too immature to permit of a conscious and deliberate advance of the society in any self-determined direction.

What are the main factors in the development of the society? They are broadly as follows. The formation of a society, however primitive it may be, leads to an increase in the population both from the greater abundance of food and the greater security due to the co-operation of its members. The growing numbers and increasing strength of the society tend to limit the area of its wanderings in search of food, to confine its migrations to a more or less extensive district, and to exclude other societies from that district. Tribes and tribal areas become distinct, foreshadowing the geographical division of nations in later times.

In certain parts where game is abundant and the area of land vast, the community may continue to be solely a hunting community, ignorant till even recent times of the rudest arts of agriculture. The progress of the purely

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hunting community does not continue far. It either develops into an agricultural society, or remains in a savage state. We will consider first the undeveloping hunting people.

Their main occupation, as with all societies, is the acquisition of food. This is managed efficiently enough while their numbers are growing. The time, however, inevitably comes when the sources of food become less productive. The steady increase of a hunting community, ranging over one district, must soon tend to lessen the numbers of animals in that district either by destroying them for food or by driving them into remoter parts. The growing difficulty of obtaining food—the increasing struggle for existence—has far-reaching effects. The numbers of the community are restricted, partly by the death of the young (either by the direct action of their necessitous elders, or by the hardships of their migratory existence), partly as a result of the emigration of some of the tribe in search of quarters more abounding in game. The phenomena which marked the evolution of the family tie are now repeated. These various offshoots remain attached by blood and tradition to the central body—friendly to each other, hostile to strangers ; and thus a family or group of small societies grows up, the first step in the evolution of a nation.

Further, the more extensive wanderings of these various sections bring about more frequent collision with other wandering communities ; and

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the instinctive hostility between unconnected societies becomes an ever more active condition.

This growing pressure tends to a closer organisation of each society. The improving mental capacity of the people enables them in some degree to trace the connection between cause and effect. They come to perceive in time that skill and endurance in the chase, courage and resource in war, are important to their well-being ; and there grows up the habit of following the lead of some one man who exhibits those qualities in the highest degree. The social organism is developing structure.

A society of this purely hunting type cannot, however, become highly organised. The numbers are few. Possessing no settled habitation, they acquire no property beyond what is necessary to their mode of life. Tents, clothing, utensils and weapons remain of the simplest kind. In such a society there are no distinct classes. The chief is the recognised director in war, and the consideration and influence so won may enable him to live with some greater show of abundance than his fellows. He has, however, no opportunity of becoming a despot. The other men, though recognising his pre-eminence and accepting his rule in war, are not disposed to yield their liberties in peace. He is first among equals, and no more.

It is not difficult to picture the general condition of such a society. Examples of societies of similar types and of scarcely more advanced

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development can be found in the world to-day. In its general features it differs little from the first human society already described. The organism has developed a primitive head ; but otherwise shows little change. It is still an essentially simple organism whose activities are almost entirely devoted to self-maintenance. Food consists of objects of the chase, and the tribe is consequently migratory in its habits. It moves from place to place as the search for food compels. As the supply of food varies considerably according to the seasons and the location, the society must be subject to frequent changes in its material condition. Great abundance of food is followed by an equally great scarcity ; and as the people have acquired little foresight, and have no means of preserving animal food, they are liable to times of great and general distress. The men are hunters and warriors. Of other employment they have none. They look upon these occupations as their own special sphere, and leave all other tasks to the women. The man becomes an expert hunter, a cunning warrior. His life consists of periods of great exertion and activity, followed by times of absolute idleness. Strength and endurance being the qualities most important to him, so they are the only standards of excellence he yet recognises. The position of woman, as the weaker vessel, is one of permanent subjection. There is between man and woman no sense of equality. She is the bond-slave of her lord and master, subject to all his

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whims and caprices, a beast of burden, and little else. Her position of economic servitude has already been referred to ; and, as the difficulties of food supply increase, this occasion of her inferiority increases. She spends her time in drudgery, receiving little recognition except in the shape of blows when all is not well with her master. As she does not share the mental stimulus of the chase, so she tends to fall behind the male in mental capacity. She does not equal him in energy and resource ; although, poor wretch, she soon excels him in uncomplaining patience in distress. Low as is the state of this society, frequent as are its periods of distress, it is not afflicted with that peculiar curse of all highly organised societies—industrial unemployment. The cause of this has already been suggested, and need not be dwelt upon here. Every man has access to the spontaneous products of nature ; and there is none willing to work and yet idle and starving because circumstances deprive him of that access to the means of life.

Meanwhile the mental development of the people has brought into existence some primitive sense of right and wrong. In older times food and female were the only objects of dispute between the males. But now various other kinds of property have come into their possession—such as bows and arrows, tents, skins, ornaments, etc:—and the multiplication of property has multiplied in equal measure the opportunities

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of quarrel. Such questions had been left to be fought out between the parties when that course brought no danger to the rest. In times of war, however, such internal strife jeopardised the safety of the whole; and it was doubtless under such circumstances that the instinct of self-maintenance led the other males to interfere in the quarrel, and compel the disputants to abide by the decision of some third party. That third party was naturally the leader of the expedition; and so the chief became also the dispenser of justice. This practice of deciding disputes between warriors extended by degrees to times of peace. Possibly it was found inconvenient in a crowded camp to have men hunting each other promiscuously and carrying on their private war to the common danger. In such a state of things it must soon happen that the disputants are compelled to lay their cases before the chief, and accept his ruling, or are required to fight out their struggle in some determined spot without danger to the rest. The ordeal of battle (private war restricted to a determined time and place) is one of the first of judicial institutions.

As regards intertribal relations it may be pointed out that the necessity of self-preservation which led to a sense of right and wrong in the society did not extend beyond the borders of that community. The instinct of self-preservation led most naturally to the slaughter of the foreigner; and this tendency was probably strengthened by the fact that war gave some outlet to the old

animal instincts which the necessities of social life had done something to suppress. The normal relations between different societies in this stage is thus one of instinctive hostility, of naked individualism, unrelieved by the faintest trace of the social instinct. How slowly the sense of right and wrong between nations has evolved may be judged from the circumstances of our own time !

A few words must be given to the influence of sex on the life of the society. In the animal world it is an almost invariable rule that the male courts the female, and the former has in the course of ages evolved many ornamental qualities to assist him in his suit. The female is, except as regards strength, as free and independent as the male. She is in no sense subject to the male, but in all the opportunities of self-maintenance stands on an equality with him. This equality, as we have seen, tended to disappear as man left the purely animal state and began his slow progress to civilisation. By the time he had reached the stage of society just described this equality had entirely disappeared, and woman had become physically, socially, politically his inferior. In spite of that fact, however, when the sexual passion was most powerful in the man he courted as did his animal ancestors, and, like them, presented strange and curious ornamentations to attract the goodwill of the female. As a consequence, the young savage spent much of his leisure in decorating

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himself in various fantastic ways, spending, as has been remarked of North American Indians, hours together in painting and bedizening himself. Strange that he should do this at a time when superior strength put woman entirely at his mercy, and when the general contempt in which she was held left her with little protection. It is curious to note that there now existed in the man two opposite attitudes towards the woman. The old instinct made her a creature to be sought, flattered, cajoled, and, if possible, won. It made her mistress of the man, and put him in the position of a suppliant, of one who displayed his various attainments and attractive qualities in order to obtain from her the gratification she alone could bestow upon him. On the other hand, she had become in later times the abject slave of the man, subject to him in all things, enjoying no rights outside the range of the primitive justice that existed in the community. She was the chattel of the male, to be disposed of at his pleasure. As a consequence we find the flattery and cajolery of the man, his humility, his offers of presents before marriage, contrasted with his brutal treatment of the woman after he had won what he sought. No wonder that savage woman aged rapidly, and became a wretched, hideous and broken creature as soon as youth was past. This cruel contrast between the courted girl and the ill-used woman shows most plainly in its hideous deformity in so-called savage races; but it has persisted to this day, through all

the wonderful advance that man has made. A moment's consideration of the relations between man and woman in modern Europe will demonstrate the truth of this ; and we find in it an explanation of the otherwise inconceivable brutality of husband to wife in certain of the uneducated classes, and the neglect that falls to the wife's lot among others. We could hardly wish a more striking illustration of the persistence of those characteristics acquired in the remotest antiquity, ingrained in the functional memory of the race by long habit, and handed down to the present day as one of the most vital of modern social problems.

One further point, and perhaps the most important in its later effects, that marked the advance of man to the condition we have been considering, remains to be noted—the evolution of religion.

The man-animal was, as we have seen, a purely self-regarding creature, his whole activities and faculties being devoted to the preservation of his own existence. Both in the search for food and in avoidance of danger oft-repeated experience had developed in the race an instinct which guided the man in the various pursuits on which his existence depended. He had learned in this way what animals he could follow in safety, and how best to secure them. He had learned also what to avoid. It might be the huge beast that threatened him and drove him to concealment or to refuge in a tree. It might be the noxious reptile whose neighbourhood he feared ; or again

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it might be various inanimate natural objects which brought their own special risks, the roaring torrent, the rushing avalanche, the falling tree, the lightning flash, or the forest fire. Some he had learned to avoid. All he had come instinctively to recognise as dangerous. Time passes ; and as his mental powers evolved he became something more than the merely conscious animal. He became—at first in very low degree—the self-conscious man ; and appeared in his new guise of a thinking and reasoning being. This faculty of reasoning—the power of comparing impressions in the field of consciousness—brought with it the dim conception of cause and effect apart from the actual objects involved. The new faculty like his other faculties was evolved under the influence of the self-regarding life principle, and its exercise was at first entirely devoted to his one primal purpose of self-maintenance. It aided him in the slow improvement of his tools from the broken flint to the bow and arrow. It enabled him in due course to increase his speed in the chase by utilising that of the horse. It brought him the idea of traps as an easier method of catching his quarry than actual chase. To it he owed the invention of boats—the application of his experience of floating wood. If it was important in enabling him to secure food, it was no less important in helping him to avoid danger. Hunger and fear were the keynotes of his life. Some dangers he could provide against simply enough. He could, for example, escape the risks

from wild beasts by seeking refuge in a cave and securing the mouth ; and later by building a fence or using the power of fire to ward off attack. But there were other dangers whose antidote was not so clear ; and his mental perception of cause and effect led him into devious courses.

It is necessary to bear closely in mind the whole process of mental evolution through which the early man had passed, and the position he had reached, if we would form any real conception of his mental attitude towards the world around him. His mental faculties had developed by slow and imperceptible degrees from the purely animal stage. There was no point at which he ceased to be mentally an animal and began to be mentally a human being. The whole was a long and uniform growth, the condition at any one point being the direct outcome of its predecessor. In the earliest stages, before the power of reason had developed, the brain of the animal received impressions from outside through the organs of sense ; its acquaintance with, or experience of, the external world being confined to those impressions. At that period, however, the activities of the animal were solely concerned with the preservation of its existence ; and its organs of sense divided the world (so to speak) into things which concerned it and things which did not. The former resulted in some degree of activity on the animal's part (pursuit of food, flight from danger, etc.), and became associated with the animal's instincts. The latter had no such effect, and,

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influencing the animal's existence in no way, left no such permanent impression on the brain. The ground it walked on, the many motionless objects around it, were the occasion of constant impressions through the organs of sight and touch ; but those impressions were of a negative character, little more than reflections in a mirror, which passed and left no trace behind. On the other hand, those external objects which did directly influence the animal's existence were of all kinds, animate and inanimate ; their one common attribute being apparent motion. There had been nothing in the experience of earlier organisms to classify external things into animate and inanimate. That line of division was in no way concerned with the animal's existence ; nor could the senses convey to the primitive brain any impression of the intrinsic qualities of external things (such as their vitality), but only of their external appearance (such as their motion). Hostile beast and falling tree, the rushing torrent, the burning sun, the pouring rain, all fell into the same category of things of immediate concern to the animal, and were all distinguished from the things of no concern by their common quality—motion. The world was divided into things that moved and those that did not move—not into things living and non-living. It is curious to observe that the modern mind, while clearly and sharply dividing animate from inanimate objects, still makes a subtle distinction between things moving and things inert. Moving objects (especially the

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self-moved, such as ships, engines, motors, machinery of all kinds, etc.) convey impressions to the mind closely analogous to those of living things. They have a kind of quasi-personality; and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the feelings they inspire from those which animate objects create in the mind. It is not improbable that this mental condition is a survival from those ante-human times when motion and not life was the main line of division between material objects.

Some of the dangers which threatened the animal could be avoided by flight or concealment; and flight and concealment became in due course instinctive actions of the animal at the sight of moving objects.

As the mind of the human animal developed he began to be dimly conscious of sensations in himself—anger, fear, hunger, etc., and of the fact that such feelings led him to certain actions—destruction of his enemy if possible, pursuit of food, and the like. He was one of the world of moving things, and under the influence of the primitive power of reason that was slowly dawning he attributed like qualities to all other moving things—not only other animals, but the sun, the river, the rolling rock, the waving tree. All these were credited with the same attributes, and were looked upon as possessing those qualities which we now associate with the idea of life. Such was the world around him. Of these “living” things, all were probable sources of

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danger to him, some possible sources of advantage. So far as they were sources of danger, some could be shunned or destroyed. Others, however, could rarely be avoided, and never destroyed; and in those cases the instinct of self-preservation brought him in time to seek another way of escape—by placating them.

There was no conception in those early days of spirits dwelling in these various natural objects. Such a conception was of later growth. To our early man these various objects were themselves the “living” sources of his danger.

How placate them? In the mind of the primitive man, as has been observed, these objects were possessed of the same feelings and sensations as himself; and his simple perception of cause and effect taught him that they might be pleased by the things which pleased him. Food he sought for himself—and therefore offered the objects of the chase to the danger-threatening beings. The blood of an enemy pleased him, associated as it was with the sensation of success in a life-endangering strife—and the blood of his enemy he offered in its turn. Ornaments gratified his vanity—and ornaments he strung upon the trees in this same endeavour to secure the favour of these possible enemies. He had not yet become religious; but the seeds were sown, and religion was one of the first fruits of his dawning reason.

Meanwhile man's tottering footsteps in the path of reason were leading him to strange dis-

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coveries. He saw a live enemy who could do him harm. He saw the same enemy stricken at his feet and powerless. The mighty beast full of threats and menace—the same beast motionless and innocuous. The ideas of life and death were still remote from him ; but his experience taught him that the dead enemy was lacking something that made the living enemy so dangerous. In time, under the influence of his simple reason, he came to believe that the missing thing, the source of all the man's activity, must be the real living thing, and the body but the place in which it dwelt ; and so by degrees he grew to regard those various natural objects, ordinarily so still but sometimes so full of danger, as in the same way the dwelling of the real living thing rather than the living thing itself. Thus, step by step, the idea of spirits (unseen living things) dwelling in all natural objects evolved, not clearly, in set terms, but as an instinct, an inherent impression, unexpressed and ill-defined, but still governing his attitude towards those objects.

These spirits were still living things with just the same feelings as the man himself. They had merely taken the place in his mind previously occupied by the material objects with which these spirits were so closely associated. They were not even a different class of beings ; but just the same as himself, though with different powers and modes of life ; still merely objects of fear to be placated or terrified, to be pleased only with the

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things that pleased the man, or subdued by fear as he himself was.

In the primitive hunting community we have been considering, religion, the conception of the relations between man and these unseen powers, was of a correspondingly simple type. As in war one man was recognised as pre-eminent, so some one man came to be regarded as most able to win the favour of the spirits, to avoid the consequences of their wrath, or secure the benefits of their goodwill. The medicine man, the obeah man—forerunners of the priest—had arrived. We need not dwell upon the early progress of this religion—how these spirits of unknown powers came in time to be looked upon as the possible bestowers of good as well as the probable inflictors of evil—how with the growth of the supposed powers of the spirits, the influence of the medicine man, alone able to turn those powers to good account, increased, till at length he exercised an influence greater than the chief's. All this will appear later. It is sufficient to indicate here how the change in the social instincts of the man were duly reflected in the spirits. As he became more conscious of friendly feeling towards his kind, the spirits became capable of more friendly feeling towards him. Feats of courage and endurance commended him to his fellows and brought him influence and favour ; so similar feats were undertaken in honour of the spirits, as the barbarous self-torture of some savage races amply testifies. As the aid of the spirits was desirable in all

things, so he undertook nothing without approaching them. Births, marriages, deaths, had their appropriate ceremonies. Hunting expeditions, warlike operations—all were preceded by ceremonies designed to secure the co-operation of the unseen powers. We need not go far to find those same feelings in operation to-day.

Here we may leave the hunting community, side-tracked as it were in the path of progress, and destined to be destroyed in due time by races that had happened on a more propitious path.



CHAPTER VI

THE PASTORAL STAGE—CLASSES

LET us pursue our journey, and follow the race in a further stage of its advance.

Evolution is the maintenance and perpetuation of variations in the structure and functions of organisms. Those variations depend upon circumstances which, so far as the organism is concerned, are accidental. Thus a certain type of country and climate produced the hunting community with its special features and limited progress. Another set of conditions produced societies of other types. The earlier steps of each were of necessity broadly similar.

It happened, for example, that in a certain district where game was less abundant the human beings became more addicted to a vegetable diet. Their migrations were consequently fewer, and they tended to remain where their special form of food was most easily found. Under such circumstances, living on or near the same spot for more or less lengthened periods, they must frequently have observed the growth of the plants on which they largely depended, and have seen such plants springing up where the refuse of their meals had been cast aside. Had man remained merely a

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conscious non-reasoning animal this repeated experience might have created in him an instinct in seeking such food ; but it could not have led him to bury the refuse in order that, in time, the mature plant might spring up. Such a perception of the connection between cause and effect, separated by a considerable lapse of time, needed a very substantial measure of reasoning power. That power came in due course as man's mental faculties evolved, aided by the constant presence of the phenomena of growth, and the continual necessity of seeking food, till at length some man, a genius in his time, made the marvellous discovery that the sowing of the seed (or the burying of the refuse) was followed in time by the growth of the desired plant.

It is difficult to conceive the period that elapsed between man's first emergence from the purely animal state and this triumph of his powers. The period was undoubtedly enormous under the most favourable circumstances. The race had already reached the stage of the simple society described in the last chapter when this new era dawned. The time, however, came ; and at length we find man adding to the products of the chase the fruits of a rude agriculture.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this fact in determining the future destiny of the race. Its earlier effects may be shortly enumerated.

Agriculture, however rude, kept the man in one spot for a considerable period, at least from the

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sowing of the seed to the gathering of the harvest. The light, portable shelters that could alone be used in a purely hunting and migratory society gave place to more permanent structures. The hut followed the tent; and the village succeeded the camp. The change was slow, and for a long period the society remained chiefly a hunting community, shifting its location as soon as its primitive harvests were gathered. But the instinct of self-maintenance must have led slowly but surely to the subordination of the chase to agriculture—the greater certainty of food incident to agriculture, its greater abundance and more regular supply, with the comparative security from attack which a settled habitation enjoyed—must have combined to hasten this movement, to perpetuate this variation in the habits and functions of the social organism.

We may step over the period of change, and observe the state of the society when it had become a definitely settled agricultural community of a simple type, many examples of which are still presented by the native life of Africa.

As the agricultural evolved from the hunting community, so the various features that characterised the former found their source in the latter. Food, which had been mainly the produce of the chase, varied occasionally with fruits or roots, was now for the most part vegetable in character, varied or embellished with animal food, killed in the hunt or bred in the village. Its supply was more definite in quantity; and the foresight that

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enabled the man to see from the seed to the fruit enabled him also to provide in more or less sufficient way for the intervals between one harvest and another. We found in the earlier community that the men confined their energies to hunting and war, leaving all the tasks of the home to the women. The change in the general habits of the people was slow and gradual. The labour of the hunt diminished, and the labour at the home increased by imperceptible degrees. The division still remained ; and the work incident to their simple agriculture fell upon the women. The men of the tribe still hunted, partly for the food and partly from habit, which had made that mode of life natural to them. As the customary sphere of the male's activities, such a mode of life was manly ; while the labour which fell to the woman shared the contempt and was marked with the inferiority which distinguished the woman herself from the men of her tribe.

War also remained the peculiar province of the man. He found less occasion for war as he discontinued his migratory existence ; but the ingrained habit of countless generations could not yield at once to the changing conditions of life. Man began to wage war as a pastime, as a means of pleasurable excitement, as the necessity for it diminished. Hunting also remained a manly pleasure when agriculture had in large measure rendered it unnecessary as a source of food. So strong are the instincts which primitive necessity implanted in the man, that even to-day civilised

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peoples still regard war and the chase as in an especial sense manly and noble occupations, while the manual labour, the dull routine of daily toil, which became in those early days the object of manly scorn as being the proper sphere of woman, are still instinctively regarded with contempt. In our attitude towards those various occupations to-day we are once more demonstrating our descent from the savage peoples of those far distant times. Among those remote ancestors of ours hunting and warlike expeditions became a common source of gratification to the men who resorted to them as a means of escape from the idleness and tedium of village life. Between these outbursts of activity the men passed their time in indolence, doing little or nothing to assist the women in the tasks upon whose results the community now mainly depended.

Idleness is said proverbially to result in mischief; and so we find here. In a well-developed mind past impressions or experiences revive with ease and clearness. It possesses a faculty of conscious memory which enables it to recall the incidents of the past. Moreover an organ tends at all times to exercise its special function under the influence of the life principle; and so, in those leisure moments which the savage man enjoyed, his mind, free from any all-absorbing occupation, roamed over the events of the past. He became naturally a story-teller or story-hearer; and we commonly find at the present day story-telling as the favourite occupation of many

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barbarous tribes between their periods of activity. This constant exercise of the memory and the imagination stimulated mental development, and served also to hand down from generation to generation experiences more or less useful to the race, which might otherwise have been lost. Human knowledge, as apart from human instinct, first began to be collected and recorded in this way. This was so much to the good; but this more ample leisure, in encouraging the imagination of man, had some distinctly unfortunate results.

Man's earlier relations with the outside world had been for the most part either indifference or hostility as was the case with the rest of the animals. His increasing faculty of memory and imagination enabled him to recall those feelings even when no enemy was near; and the instinct of hostility and fear gave birth under this new stimulus to the passion of hate. This in its turn brought into existence the instinct of cruelty. It was no longer sufficient to destroy the enemy and so remove the cause of fear. Gratification was to be found in witnessing the suffering of the enemy; and the torturing of captured foes became one of the delights of the idle braves.

In such a purely self-regarding age the mind was naturally concerned almost exclusively with the affairs of the individual himself. Leisure gave extended opportunities for this self-contemplation; and the man became, not only "instinctively" self-regarding, but selfish in the modern social sense.

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His leisure was presently given up to pleasure, *i.e.* voluntary occupations which gratified his personal feelings. Vanity found wider scope for self-adornment; and the means of self-adornment became special objects of desire.

Meanwhile this change in the habits of the race had brought with it some improvement in the condition of woman. A settled habitation, rude as it might be, could not fail to remove some of the hardships incident to a wandering life; while the better food supply which all enjoyed left fewer opportunities for the unsuccessful hunter to wreak his anger upon the most convenient victim—his wife. She was still in very truth the maid of all work, the slave of her lord and master; but the conditions of her life in the village could hardly fail to have excelled those of the camp. Moreover, as the agricultural character of the community increased, the food supply depended more and more upon her exertions; till she became a piece of property of very considerable value. A strong, healthy woman who could keep the larder well supplied was a very desirable acquisition in the eyes of the young brave bent upon housekeeping. She became in fact a pearl of great price, the expense of her purchase in some tribes reaching a very substantial figure. Woman thus acquired some sense of her own value—a real element in her progress to liberty. She also secured somewhat better treatment from her husband, for the simple reason that it would be a great waste to injure or destroy what had

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cost so much to obtain. She was, however, still property, had no part in the affairs of the community, and no voice in its councils. She became, too, one of several wives where her husband could afford to purchase more than one of such valuable cattle.

One important variation from the character of animals is noticeable here. Where the wife has a definite material value, and where her future comfort depended in some degree upon the position of her purchaser, it became in her interest to court the hoped-for husband. Accordingly the female began to display ornaments, and otherwise advertise her attractions by arts suitable to the occasion. This rivalry between the females, so largely the result of her economic dependence, was destined to proceed to great lengths; it reverses what appears to be the general state of things in the animate world. The change, which was in the first place due to woman's dependent condition, was intensified as inequalities grew up in the positions of the male members of the community. We have in this mental degradation of woman, in her craze for self-adornment and her eagerness for admiration, one of the fruits of a definite system of property—significant of greater changes yet to come. That instinct plays a part of no mean importance in the problems of the race to-day.

It may be observed that as yet the problem of unemployment had made no sign. There were no restrictions on the men as regarded their

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occupations. They were free to hunt where they pleased. Private property in land had not yet risen to limit the individual's opportunities of seeking food ; nor had agriculture, with the consequent individual use of land for lengthened periods, extended so far as to encroach upon the lands hitherto the home of those animals the savage hunter pursued. Nor was there any lack of opportunity to cultivate the soil. Agriculture was confined to a few patches of land in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, and the available quantity of such land far exceeded the requirements of the small community. Private property in land, and, in greater degree, a vast increase in the population, were destined to change all this ; but for the present there was still free and direct access to the means of existence open to all the community. The main cause of their evils was rather the absence of any spur to continuous employment than any lack of opportunity to labour.

Of the mental advance of the people something has already been said. They had definitely emerged as rational beings, although for the present the scope of their reasoning powers was very limited. With much leisure and continual intercourse their ideas became more varied in kind ; while the power of memory and of abstract conception made definite progress. However, in the ordinary affairs of life, men and women were still governed by habit ; and in their attitude towards other individuals and other tribes instinct,

or ingrained prejudice, remained, as before, their guiding principle.

Private property—the appropriation of some object of utility to the sole use of an individual—had already put in an appearance in the earlier hunting community. The conditions of existence, however, had restricted it mainly to the primitive tools and weapons made by the labour of the individual possessor. The more settled mode of life of the village community, the improvement in the arts which resulted from the mental advance of the race, lent a much greater diversity to those objects. Not only did private property embrace a greater variety of things—huts, utensils, weapons, tools, ornaments, cattle, wives, etc.—but these articles differed widely in their intrinsic value. Much labour and ingenuity were expended on the weapons and ornaments of the men, a considerable portion of their leisure being devoted to that object; while the articles of common use began to show differences in workmanship and decoration which made them in very different degrees objects of desire. This important extension of the range and values of private property compelled a closer organisation of the society. Mankind had hardly emerged from the stage of pure individualism in which each was an independent unit, living for himself and by himself, seizing whatever attracted his desire where he had the power to do so, deterred only by fear of a stronger. During the period of man's slow emergence from the animal to the human stage there was no mental conception

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of the distinction between "mine" and "thine." Such a distinction followed, but could not have preceded, the appearance of personal property. This instinct to take whatever struck the fancy of the individual is a very common characteristic of savage races to-day, most travellers dwelling upon their 'thievish propensities'; and survives in very considerable measure among civilised peoples. In those early days of private property this natural disposition of the people must have caused continual disputes; and, as no settled community could exist while constantly threatened with this internal rupture, some centre of authority to whom these disputes could be referred became more and more essential. The chief, instead of being a mere leader in war or council, acquired by degrees a voice in all the affairs of the village, and developed in time into the chief in fact, the absolute despot of the community. The development of structure in the social organism had evolved a distinct and determinate head.

As an inevitable consequence of this consolidation of power in the hands of an individual at a time when the human being was still for all practical purposes a purely individualistic, self-regarding animal, devoting his powers to the gratification of his own wants and desires, the chief quickly became possessed of an abundance of those things then regarded as desirable. His cattle swelled in numbers, his wives became a multitude, his dwelling expanded to accommodate his growing circle. His slightest whim was law,

while the lives and property of his subjects lay at his absolute disposal. Under normal circumstances, too, he must have developed a love of cruelty begotten in the men by their careless indolence. The whole of this seems to have been the inevitable outcome of preceding conditions. It certainly appears that these societies could not have been held together at such a low stage of human advance except by a ruthless and despotic ruler whose might was the sole right. Thus, even in those early days, as the limits of private property extended so did the bounds of individual liberty contract.

Subject to the whim of the chief, the men of the community enjoyed their own property and used it as seemed good to them. The rude justice of the age consisted solely in settling disputes as to the possession of property, the settlement no doubt usually resulting in a large part of the property in dispute falling to the chief—a foretaste of later times. Woman, being property and not a property holder, had of course no place in this judicial system except as the thing in dispute, an unenviable position she retained until quite recent years in even civilised societies, and which colours questions affecting her sex in England to-day.

The appearance of private property, with its monster birth the despotic chief, ushered in the age of classes. This special feature of later societies could not, however, become pronounced in the small community at present before us. The

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chief had no alien population against which he needed protection, and, exercising despotic power, had no occasion to share that power with a class. A few of the more prominent men, distinguished by courage in war, or by blood connection with the chief, might command more consideration and enjoy more property than the general body of the community, and formed a kind of intermediate class between the chief and the common people. On the whole, however, there could have been little to choose between the different members of a community so small and with wants so simple and so easily satisfied. Property and classes—those twin burdens for the shoulders of future ages—had, however, made their inevitable appearance; and most of the problems that later times present arise from that Frankenstein of our early ancestors.

If, however, these new factors in human life were fruitful of present and future evils, it must be admitted that they brought in their train benefits of untold advantage to the race. Social organisation was essential to all human progress. Without it the race must have remained on a level with the animals, living a predatory existence, depending entirely upon the spontaneous gifts of nature for subsistence, mentally and morally undeveloped. Remembering the purely animal self-regard of the primitive man, we cannot but recognise that organisation must at first have consisted in the violent repression of those anti-social instincts, and that such repression could

alone come, not from the mutual goodwill of the people (which was non-existent), but from the self-regard of some one individual powerful enough to force his will upon the others. At the worst such despotism substituted one possible enemy for many, and gave to the weaker members a degree of security which they could not have enjoyed had the conduct of each individual been unrestrained. Organisation, too, assured to each the enjoyment of the fruits of his own labour in greater measure than before; and as time went on and security increased provided the greatest stimulus to individual effort that could exist among a people mainly governed by the instinct of self-regard.

Even more important was the the moral effect of these new conditions. The habitual self-restraint which individuals were compelled to exercise, the partial suppression of their predatory instincts so far as concerned their fellow-villagers, led to a real modification of human character. The habit of respecting the property of his neighbour acquired in due course somewhat of the nature of an instinct existing side by side with, and tending always to restrain, the more fundamental instinct of self-regard. This instinctive regard for the person or property of others was the seed from which has sprung our conception of right and wrong; and we may perhaps regard this as the most important of the consequences which flowed from the definite organisation of human society.

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Religion also was thrusting its grim presence upon the people. Its progress in the still migratory, hunting community has already been noticed. Its development was rapid as the habits of the race became more settled. The character of the unseen spirits changed with that of the man, the human mind being as yet unable to conceive a being with other than human qualities. The invisible powers were indeed human in all their attributes, finding gratification in just those things which pleased their human fellows. The man now possessed a hut, and accordingly bestowed a hut upon the spirit whose aid he sought. He himself gloried in scenes of blood and torture, and his religious rites partook of the same character. So too the things he offered for the acceptance of the unseen were such as appealed most to himself—cattle, fruits, ornaments, and male and female victims. The growing imaginative power of the people magnified the terrors the unseen ones inspired; and in due proportion increased the importance and power of the priests who were alone regarded as capable of influencing them.

In later times, as for example under the Roman Empire, it is probable that some of the priests shared the views of the sceptical philosophers while continuing to perform their religious functions; but there is no doubt that at this early period the priest shared with his fellows their instinctive belief in the unseen powers, and in his influence over them. Being like his fellows a

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self-regarding animal, seeking his own gratification in all things, the priest doubtless found his position a fruitful source of advantage to himself, and came in time to wield, in his own sphere, an influence to which even the chief had to yield.

Religion, however, born as it was of ignorance and fear, had at present no moral aspect. Indeed, in such a purely individualistic age, morality—the sense of right and wrong—did not exist. The sole object of religious ceremonies was the placating of the unseen powers in order to escape the danger their ill-will might involve, or to secure their help in the special concerns of the individual. Those ceremonies performed, and the necessary offerings made, the man was entirely free to pursue his own ends unrestrained.

All this time the man remained little affected by other than purely selfish motives. The individualism of the primitive organism was still his main characteristic. Between different and unrelated tribes this feeling reigned supreme. While in his own society it was even yet his leading impulse, though modified in action by the restrictions imposed by social life. The social bond was so far negative in character. The centrifugal force of individualism had not given place to the centripetal force of the social instinct; it was merely held within bounds by the habits of social life and the direct interference of the governing power. The social instinct in its active form is essentially based on sympathy and affection. It does not exist unless the members of the society

feel for the distress of others, share the pain of such distress, and are actively impelled to do all possible to relieve it. The social instinct in its full development is an active force impelling one to work for the good of another, just as the individualistic instinct is a like force driving one to work for his own advantage. Some dim shadow of that social instinct may have appeared in this primitive society ; but it had as yet no strength to modify in any appreciable degree the influence of the instinct of self-regard.



CHAPTER VII

THE NATION

THE stage of evolution we have now reached corresponds in its broad features with the general position of Central African tribes. From the remote period when the race first developed into the simple village community the natives of Central and Southern Africa have made but little progress. Some small improvements were effected as time went on in their simple possessions; language improved; while a cloud of traditions and superstitions gathered by degrees about their religious, political, and domestic affairs. In spite, however, of these accretions, in all essentials the evolution of those races was arrested at the early stage just described. Whether as a result of climatic conditions or other causes, the variations which in other parts led to a further development in the mental capacity and material advantages of mankind either did not occur among these peoples or were not of sufficient advantage to obtain a permanent place among them. We may therefore leave them living under these primitive conditions, until fate brings them into contact with a more highly developed race—a collision which has already occurred, and whose tragic

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consequences are at the present moment working themselves out in the presence of a well-nigh helpless civilisation.

We find in sub-tropical Europe and Asia a set of climatic and other conditions which have facilitated variations in the human organism capable of much greater development than those presented by tropical countries. The process of evolution is much as before till the stage of the village community is reached; but the point which seems to have been the end of the line of advance of one branch of the human race was but the beginning of that to which we owe our modern civilisation.

We may then picture to ourselves a vast tract of country presenting the widest diversity of physical conditions, and a great variety of animal and vegetable life, inhabited by sundry small communities presenting in their general features the characteristics of that described in the previous chapter.

The tendency of population is to increase, owing to the reproductive power of individuals, so far as sufficiency of food and freedom from danger permit. The community we now have to consider was favourably situated so far as its numerical increase was concerned, enjoying not only a good climate but abundance of animal and vegetable food, with tolerable freedom from the attacks of wild beasts. The numbers of the community accordingly increased. Various important effects followed this increase in the population.

The supply of game fell away as the birds and beasts resorted to less frequented parts. The people became in consequence more and more dependent on agriculture, until the men themselves were compelled to take part in the cultivation of the soil. Land was almost the last of material objects to come within the sphere of private property ; and in these early days the soil was still the property of the community, *i.e.* open to the free use of all. In spite, however, of the greater abundance of food (probably in part as a consequence of that abundance) the population began to press upon the food supply of the immediate neighbourhood, compelling numbers of the younger members to detach themselves from the parent community and seek a livelihood elsewhere. If they found no foreign communities in the way, they doubtless settled down as near to the old stock as they conveniently could. This process of division continued from time to time, until a considerable tract of country was occupied by communities springing from and attached to the original society. A nation was in fact in process of evolution from the tribe. We are reminded of the original development of the first simple organism, beginning with the growth and rupture of the cell, and passing through the loosely connected group of similar cells to the organised body of cells. In just the same way the community grew and divided. Groups of attached communities appeared, and led in due time to the organism of communities—the nation.

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The special features that marked the first settled community and distinguished it from the wandering groups that preceded it were increased and magnified as this greater and more populous society consolidated. And yet there was no single feature either in the character or institutions of the people which was not evolved from earlier types under the influence of the fundamental qualities of living matter, and the constantly changing environment. Vast as is the coming change, wide as is the gulf which appears to separate the highly complex society of to-day from the state of the first solitary man-animal—wide indeed as that which separates man himself from the primeval cell—we need no more than the power of the vital principle which made the cell a living organism to account for this astonishing progression.

We may foresee the state of the first human nation if once we appreciate the condition of the village and the unseen forces which were at work within it.

The first essential of existence is food. In this respect the people in this extending community were well situated as compared with their predecessors. A temporary failure of crops in a solitary village, disease among the cattle, or successful attack by hostile neighbours, may reduce the small society to want or completely destroy it. The wider area covered by the new society, its more diverse occupations, its varied sources of food, and its relative freedom from the

risk of invasion, all tended to lessen the chance of scarcity ; and although the supply of food might vary in quantity it could rarely fall to the limits of actual famine. In this respect humanity had made definite progress, and one of its problems, for the moment at least, had lost its edge.

Another fact had contributed to render the necessaries of existence both more abundant and more certain. The work of agriculture was no longer left to the women—such a state of things would indeed be impossible where agriculture formed the main source of food. The arrival of the man as a worker in the fields not only brought a supply of energy and strength hitherto largely wanting, but it brought also to the work a more active and vigorous mind, leading to better methods and improved implements. An abundant food supply under conditions in which the labour of a part of the community is able to produce sufficient food for the whole is a necessary condition to the accumulation of any sort of wealth. This condition now obtained ; and we find accordingly material evidence of the growing prosperity of the people. The rude huts of our first villagers gave way to more substantial structures. Houses of stone or baked earth appeared, together with many other conveniences hitherto unknown. This more settled condition of life produced corresponding changes in the character of the people. Whereas the man had spent his time in useless indolence between the spasmodic activity of hunting and war, he now laboured with some

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regularity in the fields, became accustomed to a more uniform mode of life, less restless in his habits, and, among other things, more amenable to discipline. He had less opportunity for self-indulgence, and was less prone to idle vanity and self-adornment; while at the same time he was developing some of the qualities of citizenship. His attitude towards his wife improved, slowly but appreciably. Where his agricultural habits had become confirmed, whether he worked with the woman in the fields, or worked there alone, he lost that peculiar and contemptuous sense of superiority which his devotion to the manly pursuits of war and the chase had previously inspired. The gulf between man and woman, though still wide enough, sensibly lessened. She was less the beast of burden, and more the wife than before; and the family bond with its special influence on the character of the race became more intimate in its nature, and a valuable factor in the further evolution of mankind.

The change in the position of the woman was perhaps even more marked than in that of the man. She was less subjected to severe and continuous labour. Her work became more confined to lighter tasks in the field and the general supervision of the house. Blows and ill-usage, previously the common heritage of her sex, were less frequent; and the burden of life, if still heavy, was no longer almost too grievous to be borne. Long ages of ruthless subjection to the stronger animal had bred in her an instinct of

submission ; while the dull and colourless slavery of her fate had hindered the development of her mind and left her more subject to instinct and less capable of reason than her master. There was consequently in the woman no inclination to revolt against her position. She wore the chains unthinking and uncomplaining ; but in the time that had now come the chains rested more lightly upon her. Physically and mentally she improved ; and so brought another element of the first importance to the more rapid development of the race.

The earlier stages of this national growth were still free from that peculiar evil unemployment. Private property in "nature" had not yet come ; and every man enjoyed full opportunity to obtain his livelihood direct from the bounteous lap of nature herself. The change, however, was drawing near.

It was observed how the institution of classes made its first shadowy appearance in the simple village community. At the head stood the chief who had taken to himself with a free hand such of the objects of wealth as the times afforded ; while between him and the general body of the community appeared a number of men who could be distinguished from the rank and file by their greater personal influence and, in smaller degree, by their greater wealth. It is clear, however, that this differentiation of classes could not proceed far while each citizen was free to till land in his own neighbourhood or was certain of finding such

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land in some other part. Where no man was divorced from the land there could be no subjection of one class to another; there could indeed be no more than one class in the community for all practical purposes. And so we find in most of the tribes who were the forerunners of civilised societies a real equality among the members, and with it a self-reliance and a vigour which in great measure vanished with the advance of civilisation, and which have not yet reappeared.

In the period we are now considering this process was fast becoming inevitable. The moment when an increasing population could no longer find sufficient land for each individual had been postponed from time to time by emigration; but as the surrounding districts were taken up by the increasing numbers this relief grew of less and less effect, till either the subdivision of the land was so minute as to afford an insufficient livelihood to the husbandman, or till some of the surplus numbers began to secure a livelihood in other ways. In some cases the subdivision of the land had proceeded to such extremes over a very wide area, while secondary occupations had made such little progress, that the people were reduced to a condition of permanent penury, effectually blocking their further advance. Such "variation" has led to the state of things we find in China, and, in less degree, in India. In those countries the population has increased during the ages to almost the extreme limit of the capacity of the land under their primitive

cultivation. The soil has been divided and subdivided till each family has had no more than would produce the barest living in normal times. Further increase in the population and further subdivision of the soil were physically impossible ; and the surplus numbers have been swept away by periodic famines and plagues. At the same time the unfortunate direction which the evolution of these great peoples has followed has for centuries past arrested the advance of the great mass of the people. They have been regarded as a "stationary" people. The main cause of this state of things is suggested above ; and the nature of the evolutionary changes in the human race compels us to believe that the penetration of Western ideas and institutions among these dense and stationary races will lead to their renewed advance, with consequences which no man can estimate.

That stationary aspect of society we may leave. It is another by-path leading away from the goal towards which European civilisation is tending.

In other cases the subdivision of the land did not proceed to such length, and the increasing population found relief in various secondary occupations.

In our simple village community we found that the chief naturally tended to take to himself whatever gratified his desires. He became the possessor of a larger house, more cattle, more wives, and more lavish ornaments than his subjects. In short, under the purely individualistic character

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of the age all the surplus wealth of the people tended to gravitate towards the dwelling of the chief. In our simple village, where the men were mainly indolent or devoted to the chase, there could be but little surplus; and the chief's substance differed in degree, but not in kind, from that of the ordinary villagers. In a denser agricultural population, however, this margin of surplus wealth was capable of great extension; and the opportunities of self-gratification which fell to the chief and his more prominent followers increased accordingly. The dwelling of the chief became more magnificent, and its furnishing more lavish; while he collected about him a number of individuals whose personal services were required by this growing luxury—some to wait upon him, some to attend to the house, the horses, the flocks and herds, and so on. The continual enjoyment of these luxuries bred in the man through the channel of his functional memory an instinctive desire for them. They became what may be called "secondary wants" as distinguished from the primary wants of mere food and shelter. As the wealth of the country advanced, the means of gratifying these secondary wants increased; and with them the opportunities of secondary occupations (as distinct from the primary occupation of husbandry) for numbers of the people multiplied. As this proceeded, an ever increasing section of the community became more and more definitely separated from the land. At first they were closely associated in blood

with the tillers of the soil ; but in a few generations that connection disappeared, and they grew into a distinct class, with distinct habits and interests.

In this way the social organism developed structure of increasing complexity ; and the growing economic dependence of considerable sections brought into the life of the people problems and difficulties that had not previously vexed them. The course of events led inevitably to the political and economic servitude of the whole body of the people ; and of the various factors in this change we shall find the greatest and most decisive to be the appearance of a whole class of the community divorced from the land and deprived of any direct access to the objects necessary to support life.

There are two facts it is well to repeat, which indeed cannot be too often recalled, as they provide the key to this mystery of the subjection of a whole people. Man had evolved from lower forms of whose life-principle self-preservation was the most prominent feature. Man was, in short, individualistic in his very essence. In these early days of his progress that faculty reigned almost unchallenged ; and where his own interests conflicted with those of others his actions were directed almost entirely by his instinctive self-regard. Further, he was descended from lower forms whose whole activities were guided by instinct, by the tendency to repeat impressions and experiences ingrained in their functional

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memory. His faculty of reason was still weak, while reason alone could take him out of that groove to which instinct confined him. The nature of the man thus led him to accept the circumstances in which he found himself, even though his condition was one of dependence or degradation. The age of revolt against the real under the stimulus of an ideal had not yet dawned.

Bearing these facts in mind, the subsequent history of man presents little difficulty.

With the increase in the temporal power of the chief we find an even greater advance in the spiritual power of the priest. Religion, as has been pointed out, was born of fear. The attitude of the man towards religion was, in accord with his own nature, purely self-regarding. The unseen powers were capable of injuring him, and were therefore objects of fear whose enmity must be averted in suitable ways. The man's subjection to the chief was partly the result of ingrained habit and partly of present fear; but it was a fear with definite limits. He could measure the danger, foresee the consequences, and provide in some degree against them by his own unaided efforts. It was otherwise with those unseen spirits. He could not measure their powers; neither could he conceive the nature or the time of their attack. In himself he was powerless to turn their anger or escape their wrath. He depended wholly on the priest. His subjection to the priest was thus due to habit and fear, but

a fear of a more insidious and over-whelming kind than that inspired by the chief. It was a fear, too, which tended constantly to increase as his mental powers and his faculty of imagination advanced. Religion thus obtained an ever-growing hold over him ; and the priest threatened to become master both of chief and people. Moreover, with his developing mind the man's religious conceptions were changing. At first every material object was a living thing like himself, possessing similar feelings, similar desires. Then the material objects became distinct from the living things or spirits which dwelt in them. Now that he had become one of a widely extended community, so the spirits lost their isolation and independence, and became likewise units in a vast world of spirits. Just as he observed in his own society the bulk of the people devoted to certain tasks, a small number wielding greater power and mainly occupied in self-indulgence, and at the head a supreme chief, master of all ; so his world of spirits became a like society of inferior spirits with specific duties, and a number of greater spirits headed by one supreme over the unseen world. Just as his own chiefs were given up to carnal pleasures, so were his superior spirits ; while the magnificent dwellings of his earthly masters, served by a horde of retainers, repeated themselves in the temples with their swarms of attendant priests.

It is interesting to observe how man's religious conceptions changed as his own character and

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institutions have changed, and the curious way in which through all past ages the political character of human society is reflected in its ecclesiastical institutions and in its conceptions of the unseen world. The uniformity of these three aspects of human affairs suggests their common origin in those root qualities of living matter under whose influence the human organism evolved.

Meanwhile the social instinct of the man progressed. Common labour in the fields, closer intercourse in the home, could hardly fail to affect the character of both man and woman, lessening to some extent the gulf between them, creating common interests, making the man more a breadwinner and protector, less a mere despot in the home, and the woman more a helpmeet and less a slave. At the same time the growing power of the chiefs slowly reduced the man to a dependence and subjection hardly less absolute than that of the woman. Bound ever more closely to the narrow circle of their simple home and patch of land, the mutual tolerance of the earlier social man was strengthened by some degree of mutual help. The active element in the social instinct, mutual sympathy and assistance, came as one of the consequences of this enforced change in the environment of the individual. This new and vitally important feature in human character was a slow growth, and did not for long extend beyond the narrow limits of the family. But there was nothing in its nature or in the circumstances which induced it that could

so restrict its action ; and from its first appearance it has spread slowly and silently till to-day it forms a real, though often unseen, factor in our social life.

Not only did the changing conditions of life give rise to this more social habit in the individual ; the growth of his mental faculties, in his powers of reason and imagination, brought a further stimulus in the shape of sympathy. He lived now in constant intercourse with his fellows ; and his own well-being became more and more intimately connected with theirs. In most ways their circumstances were so similar that good fortune and ill fortune came to them in common. Injury to him generally accompanied injury to them ; and even when this was not the case his security was at least disturbed by anything that attacked or destroyed the security of his neighbour. In course of time the conception of injury to the one became inseparable from that of injury to the others. As the experiences themselves had been closely associated, so their mental impressions became united, until the observation of hurt suffered by another individual recalled the impression of hurt to the man himself ; and so created in the mind of the man an inclination or desire to remove the cause of the trouble. This infant growth of sympathy was a secondary quality in the human organism, evolved in the same way as other secondary qualities. It is a very common characteristic in the race to-day ; and although as yet it is generally too

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weak to overcome the inertia of the individual's self-regard, it is capable of indefinite development ; and on its growth the future of mankind in large measure depends.

With the social instinct is intimately connected the conception of right and wrong. As the word indicates, morality is a system of "habit," a code of conduct. In its earlier stages it related to those elementary self-restraints without which the most primitive society could not exist. We have already seen how in the earliest phases of the social organism such disputes between individuals as tended to endanger the community were settled by the forcible intervention of the chief or headman. The simple possessions of individuals formed the natural object of such disputes, and the interference of the chief was confined to such matters ; cases of personal violence being left to be fought out by the parties themselves. It followed naturally enough that the unwarranted aggression of one on the property of another was soon followed by more or less definite punishment. In time instinct led the individual to avoid offences which had been uniformly punished ; and this habitual distinction between acts that were punished and acts that were not marked the appearance of the primitive conscience, the instinctive recognition of certain acts as punishable or wrong. Property was consequently the first sphere of this primitive practice of right and wrong ; and it is significant that to this day an attack by one on the property of another inspires

a sense of greater repugnance in the ordinary man, and is regarded with more instinctive reprobation, than an attack on his person—a contrast which is reflected in the common law of civilised countries.

The development of the mental powers of man, the increasing complexity of his relations with his fellows, the growth of the social instinct, have made of conscience a more delicate machine, and have brought within its sphere a great variety of actions and even thoughts. It has outstripped the written law in many cases, embracing habits and traditional customs which not only vary widely in different nations, but exhibit not a little diversity in the various localities and classes of each separate country. The moral sense in all its infinite variety sprang from the simple root above described. We see that it is only indirectly related to the actual written law of the society, and in no sense connected with the religion of the people. We shall find indeed that its influence in shaping religion has been much greater than the converse action of religion in forming and directing the moral life of the people.

The moral faculty, the sense of morality as distinguished from mere habitual self-restraints, is essentially dependent on a mind that has reached a comparatively advanced stage of development, and has acquired some power of abstract conception. To refrain from inflicting injury upon another is not of necessity the result of a moral perception. It is more commonly,

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and in the earlier stages of human progress entirely, the outcome of a purely individualist instinct to avoid anything which involves injury to oneself. The animal ancestors of man were purely self-regarding organisms. Their whole activities were directed and governed as their own preservation demanded. "Right" and "wrong" at such a period had no existence. The one which destroyed its rival did no more than we do who destroy animals for food, no more in fact than we do when we destroy vegetable life in pursuance of our own interests. The animal acted in accordance with the fundamental law of its existence; acted indeed in the only way consistent with the maintaining of its existence. Right and wrong (as such) imply the judgment of conduct by reference to some ideal; and the sense of wrong is but the consciousness that a particular action is not in accord with the ideal which the individual concerned recognises as the most worthy. We shall find that that ideal is, like all other human secondary characters, the outcome of habit and consciousness. The earliest human society necessitated as the condition of its existence that its members should exercise a mutual forbearance, that they should not readily attack each other or take those primitive articles which each had made. In the slow development of the society from the group this habit of mutual tolerance had formed an essential step; and the definite emergence of the group as a society implied that this habit of mutual tolerance, within

certain narrow limits it is true, had become ingrained in the functional memory of the individuals. It had become an instinct, an actual part of the man ; and in this instinct we find the forerunner of the moral sense. The violation of an instinct carries with it a feeling of discomfort, a certain sense of distress ; and in later times when the more developed mind could connect in conscious thought the action and the subsequent distress the action came to be regarded as wrong, meaning that it was followed by undesirable sensations. As the habit of mutual tolerance preceded the determination of disputes by an outside party, so the moral sense is of older growth than the institution of justice. It covered for similar reasons a much wider field. Representing as it does the accumulated experience of the past, it is not surprising that we find now-a-days that the rules of morality are at times inconsistent with the laws of a country, the rules of justice, which represent not so much the conditions that have been as the conditions which the governing authority think desirable at the present moment. The moral habit, with its faint reflection the moral sense, became more confirmed as the society became more highly organised and the daily lives and interests of its members more intimately connected. In the period we have been considering, when the nation was in process of evolution, the moral habits of the race were suggestive of its earlier history. Between men of equal rank property, whether in

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materials, cattle, or wives, was generally respected ; and the man enjoyed in some security the things he had himself produced. If, however, the man respected his neighbour's goods, he did what he pleased with his own. He might waste his own substance, or ill-treat his wife and children. The demands of self-preservation had given no occasion to interfere with this liberty of the man ; and the idealism which in later times extended to woman some of the rights which man had possessed had not yet appeared. But if the man's goods were secure from the hand of his equal neighbour, they were not secure from the rapacity of his chiefs ; and the power which the chiefs had long enjoyed of taking to themselves the goods and chattels (including the wives and daughters) of their inferiors found a place in the moral habits of the race. Public opinion, if we may use such a term, sanctioned conduct in the chiefs which it would have disapproved in the common people ; a state of morality that has not yet disappeared from Western nations. What the chief could do, that the priest could do ; and the records of historic times afford many illustrations of the extremes to which both these parties could proceed without apparently stirring any feeling of revolt on the part of the people who were subjected to them.

The appreciable advance that, at the period of our developing nation, had occurred in the mutual relations between members of the same community, with the slow growth of the social instinct and of

moral habits, found as yet no counterpart in the external relations of the people. The necessity of mutual tolerance as a condition of existence, which paved the way for the appearance of human society, had not yet manifested itself between distinct societies. Foreign communities were still objects of indifference if too remote to be sources of danger, and objects of hate if of closer neighbourhood ; repeating thus in the evolution of societies the early steps in the evolution of man. And just as growing population forced the change in the attitude of the individual man towards his neighbour, so has it in more recent times affected the attitude of nations.

Meanwhile the external relations of our evolving nation were of the primitive, barbarous type. The small bodies of emigrants thrown off by the parent stock either found their new locality vacant or proceeded to make it so by the simple method of exterminating or driving out the existing occupiers. The fittest survived. As the area covered by the ever-growing race extended, the occasion for this species of war became more and more remote from the central groups, what struggle there might be taking place between the outermost groups and their foreign neighbours. This process continued until the ever-widening circle came into contact with a foreign community too strong to be wiped out, or with natural geographical boundaries which offered an impassable obstacle to further extensions.

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The evolving group now reached a crisis in its history. The growing population, stopped from further migration, was thrown back upon itself. The surplus must be accommodated within its own limits; and as a consequence the land became more closely occupied and more fully cultivated; while the landless class increased rapidly in numbers. Such must inevitably have been a time of considerable internal disturbance. The individualistic instinct of self-preservation came into sharp conflict with the habit of mutual tolerance and consideration which had long been growing. The alternative lay between dissolution of the society through its own internal dissensions and the attacks of other societies, or a rapid concentration of power in the hands of the central authority. The tillers of the soil found themselves with more limited lands and under a more constant necessity to seek the protection of the chief; while the latter's position was further strengthened by the increasing class of the landless who relied upon the wealthy chief for maintenance.

The growing density of the population had however, some compensations. Agriculture improved in its methods. Division of labour assisted the production of wealth and brought into existence a class of artificers not employed directly on the land nor directly by the chiefs, but producing the utensils and conveniences which the land-tiller had previously produced for himself. Villages grew into towns; and the

towns increased in magnificence as the surplus wealth of the country drained into them under the influence of the chiefs and the priests and their many followers.

We may judge then how vital a moment it was in the history of the race when the process of lateral expansion ceased. It turned a pastoral into a partially industrial people. It weakened the power of the commoners and strengthened that of the chief. It called into existence a landless class, dissociated from the soil, and dependent on employment for the satisfaction of their needs. And at this early time, when the social instinct was weak and the individualistic strong, it paved the way to the tyranny and despotism, both temporal and spiritual, that have marked the early history of every advancing human society.

The structure of the national organism is complete ; and its future problems are inseparably connected with its relations with other similar societies.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMPIRE

THE circumstances of this early nation did not permit of its peaceful consolidation and of its internal reform. The human nature of which it was composed, and the human forces that pressed upon its borders alike prevented such a desirable consummation.

The nation was not in a state of stable equilibrium. The centrifugal force of individualism made such a condition impossible. Throughout the society there existed a constant tendency to expansion under the influence of a growing population. In the more central parts the pressure, acting equally in all directions, prevented any great movement in the units, and served only to weld the mass of the people into a more helpless and servile condition. At the borders of the society, however, the pressure was not so equally distributed, and it produced there a state of tension approaching ever nearer the point of explosion. Where the obstacles to expansion were geographical only, those barriers sooner or later were forced ; and the nation expanded into the new countries so brought within its reach. At other times the lateral expansion

of the nation was prevented by the existence of other communities more or less equal to it in strength, whose borders had become co-terminous with its own. The pressure of such communities kept alive in the people at the borders an active spirit of hostility to the outsiders, and a general readiness for war; while it prevented them from sinking into the hopeless lethargy, the listless servitude that marked the more central portions.

Meanwhile there had grown up a class of idle and wealthy individuals, headed by the chief, devoted to self-gratification, chafing against inaction, and seeking some congenial distraction from the tedium of their lives. The natural pleasures of their class, their secondary wants, were mainly to be found in war and the chase. As these had been the sole occupation of the earliest men, so they were now the most deeply-rooted among the active instincts of their descendants. The attractions of war were pre-eminent; and the restless, virile peoples of the borders provided an unfailing supply of men willing and eager to share in such adventures. Moreover the closer organisation of the nation made it possible to use the whole surplus strength of the people in war where circumstances made such a step necessary. There thus came into existence not only the strong desire, but the sufficient means, to undertake expeditions against neighbouring races. Most of such expeditions were doubtless in the nature of raids in which

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the adventurers sought an agreeable outlet for their energies in ruthless slaughter and a triumphant return laden with booty and prisoners. In time, however, a more ambitious and powerful expedition set out; and we may suppose it successful in its object of subjugating the people it attacked.

Its progress was marked inevitably by wholesale slaughter to gratify the instinctive hostility of the invaders—a joy as simple and natural to them as the joy a terrier finds in killing rats, or the pleasure of our modern sportsmen in the wholesale destruction of game. This process of throat-cutting by its appeal to the individualistic instincts of the conquered effectually reduced them to submission; and, if the work of invasion had been done with sufficient thoroughness, the victors found themselves undisputed masters of the new country, free to dispose at will of the people and all that was theirs.

A wholly new phenomenon had appeared in the history of mankind, a whole people subject, not to a class of their own race sharing their own instincts and traditions, but to a class of alien race with whom they had no common ties, whose conduct was untrammelled by any instincts of forbearance or restraint. Everything in the shape of rights vanished before the sword of the conqueror. Chiefs and people were overwhelmed in one common ruin, and reduced to a common state of subjection. Their wealth, their lands, their very bodies, were parcelled out among the

victors. Slavery—the unrestrained power of one man over another—was the inevitable result, and thenceforth cast a shadow over human destinies which has never been effaced.

The general condition of things in the conquered territory can easily be imagined. If the expedition had been under the control of the chief of the invading people, the new territory became part of his domain, and was divided by him among his followers as seemed best to him. He himself doubtless returned to his own country, leaving some of his chief men to hold the new possessions. These, with their garrison, hold the conquered territory accordingly.

The new masters of the country had now full opportunity to indulge in whatever pleasures fancy suggested to them. The restraints which custom had imposed on the ruling class in their own country were no longer felt; and the sole check upon them was the possibility that excessive cruelty and oppression might drive the subject people to revolt, however hopeless and desperate such an attempt might seem. This fear, however, would not prevent the invaders from appropriating the whole surplus wealth of the conquered people. Indeed, the latter had probably been long inured to that process by their native rulers; and where that had been the case successful invasion meant little more to them than a change of masters.

What are the effects of this conquest upon the race whose evolution we are more particularly

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considering? They are in the main good if we view the ultimate destinies of the human race; but undoubtedly bad for the moment. We learn here for the first time, and may now perceive the reason, that a people who reduce others to subjection in the pursuit of empire reduce themselves to subjection.

Most of the surplus wealth of the home country had already found its way into the hands of the chief; and now, as the spoils of war, the wealth of the newly conquered territory flowed in the same direction. Our nation, as a consequence of its successful war, received a steady stream of wealth from its new territories. Its wealthy classes became wealthier; while many who had gone as adventurers returned to swell the ranks of the idle and luxurious. This accession of wealth, and the increase of the indolent, pleasure-seeking classes, increased the demand for that class of employment which was devoted to gratifying the secondary wants of the idle class. The numbers of the dependent population increased—in itself an evil thing; while their class was enlarged by crowds of the conquered people brought over to gratify the desires of the upper classes as they had gratified the rulers of the subject country.

The expansion of the nation into the empire undoubtedly proceeded in the first instance not by the voluntary union of free and independent communities, but by this method of conquest. The process was necessarily slow. Many genera-

tions must have come and gone, while the group of allied communities was kneaded and moulded into the nation under the pressure of circumstances ; and many a warlike expedition doubtless crossed the borders to be destroyed or driven back before the ultimate victory was achieved. But in the main a bird's-eye view of this long progress must have presented as its salient features the events here related.

The first successful conquest, possibly of a small and little developed race, possibly of some nation rivalling in strength its conquerors, was followed by similar expeditions in other directions, until the victors had brought under their yoke all the peoples within an area which could be definitely controlled from the centre, an area whose extent must have depended upon the degree of organisation the central nation had reached. From this time, probably for some centuries, the main activities of the rulers of this new empire were devoted, not to further extension, but to its consolidation, to the attempt to weld into one homogeneous whole the various races who now came under their sway. They achieved at last a despotism so complete, a power so undisputed, over the whole of the known world, that the fabric of the empire they raised seemed destined to last as long as time itself. Yet the vital principle that had evolved it in due season swept it away.

The self-regarding character of human nature, while it might maintain the authority of the supreme chief or king over the chieftains or leaders

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who dwelt in his immediate neighbourhood and formed part of his court, led infallibly to a weakening of that authority in the more remote quarters of the country. Within the limits of the nation itself this tendency to division at its extremities may have been held in check by the relative proximity of the central power ; but in the conquered territories many influences were at work to destroy the authority of the paramount chief. The viceroy, accustomed to authority, exercising absolute sway over the people, controlling a force sufficient to maintain his power, must soon have chafed at the authority claimed by a distant chief. From the first this disintegrating influence was at work ; and sooner or later as opportunity served the conquered country appeared once more as an independent nation, rivalling, and possibly in its turn subduing, its old masters.

It is impossible to say when the first human empire made its appearance, or how often it was replaced by others built up of its own shattered fragments. The relatively advanced state of the earliest empires of which we have historic knowledge lends probability to the belief that many had risen and decayed and left no visible trace of their existence.

The main features of this apparently inevitable process are well illustrated in the histories of those ancient empires, Babylonia and Assyria, which stand like dim shadows on the very confines of historic times, and from which the civilisation

of modern Europe has descended. A considerable knowledge of those remote times has been acquired from the inscriptions and the monuments which explorers have unearthed; and from these we may gather some idea of the foundation of those empires, of their institutions and of the character and occupations of kings and people.

The city of Ur was the chief town in the district that afterwards formed the southern part of the great Babylonian Empire. Its earliest known ruler (Uruk) reigned at latest about the twentieth century B.C., and probably much earlier. Contemporary monuments begin with that period, and show that even then the country was well advanced in the arts and sciences. He at first reigned in the district round his capital, and afterwards extended his empire by conquests. The monuments and inscriptions deal chiefly with the achievements of successive kings; and it appears from them that their chief occupation consisted in war, waged with a view to extending their dominions. Under Uruk and his successors the area over which they ruled was continually extended by foreign conquests; until under Sargon, the greatest of them, the empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

In the course of this long history the centre of power and the chief city changed from time to time, and in the heyday of its prosperity it reached a pitch of magnificence and power which overshadowed the world, and whose reflection can even now be discerned through the mists that the

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centuries have gathered round it. Great buildings and temples adorned the cities. The people were governed by an elaborate code of laws. There existed an extensive literature ; and considerable attention was devoted to the sciences, astronomy and mathematics. Religion was of a coarse, material type. There were many gods, and all the phenomena of nature were ascribed to their caprice. The supernatural world, as conceived in the religion of the people, reflected in all essentials the world of men. The gods wedded and begat other gods. There were numerous ranks among them, from the most important to the commoners, who were engaged in particular offices or charged with specific functions. All this is what might have been expected in the light of what has already been said as to origin of human religion. The great mass of the people were in a low, degraded condition, little distinguishable from absolute servitude.

The nature of the formation and the dissolution of ancient empires appears clearly enough in the history of Babylonia. It had been built up by this process of conquest and absorption, suffering possibly numerous changes in the persons of its rulers, but remaining a more or less coherent group of nations under one central authority. Its growth, however, led directly to its inevitable rupture. At the height of its power under Sargon it consisted of a great empire, over which he wielded absolute power. Viceroys ruled its various provinces, while on every side lay kingdoms which paid their annual tribute to the great king.

The whole structure, however, was on the point of collapse. At the centre the ruling classes had been enervated by a long period of luxury and security. The tide of war had rolled far from them, and had left them inert and indolent, and ever less fit to check the turbulent peoples on their remote borders. The more distant provinces, subjected to but little interference from the ease-loving capital, became less and less amenable to the central government, the viceroys arrogating to themselves an evermore independent sovereignty. The whole empire thus tending to collapse from its own internal fracture was ringed about by semi-independent nations, paying sullen tribute to the greater power, and watching constantly for an opportunity to shake off the yoke. The whole vast structure, trembling to its fall, was only maintained by the energy and genius of the king, whose vigour and military skill had added so much to it ; and on his death it collapsed like a house of cards.

For a considerable period after the reign of Sargon the history of Babylon is wrapped in obscurity. This in itself suggests the wars and turmoils that followed the removal of the strong hand. The fragments of the empire were again united by Hammurah in the sixteenth century B.C. After his time its history again becomes obscure, until it emerges again to enter upon a long struggle with the rival empire of Assyria. The latter defeated and annexed Babylon in the thirteenth century B.C., but as in previous times the unwieldy

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empire broke up, and successful revolt freed Babylon from its master. Some centuries later, after many vicissitudes, Babylon again became pre-eminent. "In the Court and among the upper classes there was at this time a luxury equal to the magnificence of the buildings. Lebanon furnished its cedars; Tyre its goods and manufactures; Helbon, the Shuite district, the north of Assyria, and Syria, furnished various wines, which flowed on the royal and priestly tables like rivers; cattle, animals of all sorts, strange birds, and fish, some presents from distant lands, others the plunder of conquered and oppressed nations, filled the fields and waters of Babylon; and the noblest youths of conquered peoples served in the presence of the king and courtiers." We may form from this picture some idea of the far-reaching power of the Babylonian king at this period; and of the magnificence and luxury to which the centre of the empire was devoted. The history of past empires was repeated. Enervation at the centre soon led to revolt at the extremities. The decline of the empire was rapid and final; and dominion soon passed to the more vigorous hands of Western peoples.

The history of the great rival empire of Assyria presents features similar in all essentials to the above. The process by which it was built up, its fluctuating fortunes, and ultimate decay, the condition of its peoples, the wealth, the power and the general occupations of its ruling class, present those characteristics which

the evolution of human nature and human institutions has led us to expect.

Nineveh is believed to have been founded by Ninus about 2300 B.C. It is said of him that "filled with the lust of empire he devoted his energies to waging war on his neighbours and adding their territories to his own. Conquest followed conquest, every new victory being the instrument of the next one, till he subdued the whole of the East." There is no doubt that the dynasty he founded built up by this process of aggregation an empire of vast extent. In the height of its power the population of Nineveh probably exceeded 50,000, and to this centre flowed the spoils of innumerable conquered peoples. The town was remarkable for its extensive palaces, which, though not magnificent as architecture, were adorned with lavish mural decorations and elaborate sculptures. These were mainly a record of the achievements of the kings in whose reigns they were executed. War was the favourite subject. Most of the bas-reliefs that have been discovered deal with this pastime of kings, recording victories, captures of fortresses, execution or slaughter of prisoners, the subsequent feasts in celebration of the triumph. Others show processions bringing to the king the spoils and tribute from subject races, and hunting scenes illustrating the diversions of the kings in the intervals of war. The cuneiform inscriptions are largely concerned with the description of continual military expeditions, the capture of innumerable

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towns, the slaughter of their defenders, and the removal of the women and treasure to Assyria. So far as it is possible to judge from the records that have been discovered, the kings during that long period of power were entirely devoted to the practice of war, finding in its excitements and its triumphs the source of their keenest pleasures. In time, however, the same fate overtook that empire as had overtaken its predecessors. Decay set in at the centre. The endless stream of wealth that poured in upon them, the security that was enjoyed at the heart of a great empire remote from the scenes of the incessant war that burned upon its borders, sapped the energy of the ruling classes, and reduced them to a state of slothfulness and debauchery. As the vigour of its rulers decayed, and delight in war gave place to a love of luxurious ease, control over the distant provinces weakened, fractures appeared in the great fabric, and soon the whole vast structure sank in ruin.

These great empires, among the first of which we have any definite knowledge, are interesting as forming a connecting link between the national systems of to-day and that earliest human empire whose evolution has already been described. They had made substantial advance in the arts and sciences, had established a considerable commerce. Secondary wants had grown in number and diversity, and an army of servants ministered to the gratification of the chiefs. On the other hand they shared with the earlier

empires the features of an almost unrelieved individualism. The people were in practical servitude, both person and property lying at the absolute disposal of the kings. The moral character of the race was clearly indicated in the treatment meted out to prisoners of war (many being flayed alive), to criminals, whose punishments were of the utmost severity, and to women, who scarcely ever appear in their records except as slaves or captives.



CHAPTER IX

ROMAN CIVILISATION

HOW easily, how inevitably, these mighty fabrics crumbled away! The forces that destroyed them were in all respects the forces that had built them up. It was the fundamental individualism, the instinct of self-regard, in the man which had reduced him, together with myriads of his kind, to subjection under the heel of an all-powerful tyrant, and carried this curse of empire from the centre in an ever-widening circle. It was the same root force that beat in again from the limits of this circle, and swept away the greater part of the imposing structure. As though a stone had been cast into a lake, and had swept the surface in one wide circling wave, which recoiled from the rocky confines of the lake, and, returning to the centre, left hardly an undulation to show where the wave's proud crest had ridden.

Our great empire, like a mighty tree, began to decay at the centre. It had derived its first impulse in a people vigorous and brave, chafing at inaction, and driven both by instinct and necessity into a career of foreign conquest. Now the tide of battle had flowed far from them. The

military requirements of the empire, like most of its other needs, were provided for by its subject peoples ; and these activities were mainly taken up in the more distant provinces. The vigour and energy of the ruling classes had been destroyed by an age of luxurious indolence ; while the spirit of the masses had been broken by generations of subjection. The extremities of the empire showed, however, a different state of things. The peoples who had most recently been brought under the yoke had not sunk into the lethargy that marked the population at the centre. They still had the energy and the spirit to struggle against the invader ; while the distance which separated them from the centre of control provided them with many an opportunity of successful resistance. At the same time, across the borders were growing up barbarous nations, still possessing those virile qualities which their mighty neighbours were fast losing, and still urged by the desire of adventure and by the attractions of the empire's wealth to press in upon it. For a time the trained armies of the empire hold the enemy at bay ; but presently their resistance is broken, and, seemingly in a moment, the whole fabric of empire collapses, while a flood of victorious barbarians sweeps over its broken fragments, and destroys the last vestige of the once imposing edifice.

The fate of the first empire differed from that of its successors in the greater completeness of the destruction that overwhelmed it, owing to the

fact that the barbarian races beyond its borders had never, either in themselves or their ancestors, come within its influence. They had not themselves reached the stage of the centralised nation, and had escaped its vitiating effects. They drew their instincts, their functional memory, their whole being, direct in a long and undiluted descent from the earliest stages of human society. The whole system which Empire involved was alien to them, and they had no natural disposition to incorporate any part of that system, or adopt the habits or mode of life of the society they destroyed—no more indeed than a band of Redskins who wiped out a White settlement.

In one respect this analogy does not hold good. A small settlement may be wiped out and leave not a wrack behind. A great and populous empire may be subjugated, and its characteristic structure destroyed; but the bulk of its people must remain. Vast numbers of those people had been subjected for generations to conditions which had radically modified, not only their habits, not only their general characters, but their very natures. As has been pointed out, the characteristics of the functional memory are, like the organs themselves, handed down by the organism to its successors, subject only to the influence of variation. It therefore appears certain that the special characteristics that had become implanted in those subjects of empire—the loss of independence, the habit of submission to authority, the blind obedience to chiefs and priests

—must have been perpetuated in some degree in the offspring of the mixed body of conquerors and conquered. Weak it may have been, and subject to considerable variation under the more dominant characters of the victorious barbarians. Some trace, however, must have remained, and have coloured the nature of the barbarian races, who in due time swept over the later empires. If we remember that all the races who now occupy the Western world have at some time in their history, and perhaps more than once, passed through similar periods of subjection, we may perhaps appreciate the deeply-rooted nature of that instinct of submission which has in recent times seemed an almost insuperable bar to progress. How often the enthusiast for reform cries in his impotence, “Why do they submit? why do they not co-operate to achieve those liberties which are theirs if they but choose to take them?” The history of the race since the first human society evolved gives the answer.

It is unnecessary to describe the ebb and flow of conquest that followed the rise and fall of the first empire. How many great kingdoms rose in majesty, only to crumble in the dust, we have little means of judging. Many variations in human societies and institutions doubtless appeared, some to vanish as useless, and others to modify permanently the character of the race. Through all these kaleidoscopic changes the primeval force of individualism—the fundamental self-regard of living organisms—manifested itself.

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It was in those early days the only real active principle in the human organism, under whose stimulus, in the incessant conflict with other similar organisms, the human mind has developed and reached ever greater heights of achievement. There was, however, a growing instinct of social life, born of the ages that had elapsed since the first primitive society came into existence. That characteristic in the normal human being is as yet mainly passive, a capacity to refrain from action directly injurious to another. It has sufficed to rub off the rougher edges of self-regard in the minor affairs of social life; and as it grows in strength promises to exercise a real check upon the older instinct. It is the development of his social instinct that was in the early time of which we have been speaking paving the way to the far-reaching changes of the last two thousand years.

Bearing in mind these two permanent factors in moulding, dissolving, reshaping human institutions, we may pass over the long period of time which elapsed between the fall of that first empire and the rise of that of Rome. A brief description of the general features of the Roman system will indicate the changes which the process of evolution had brought about, and the new problems that faced mankind in that more highly developed state.

The early history of the Roman state is buried in obscurity. It appears, however, to have begun in a small community, tradition says an immigrant

community, occupying the district lying round the present city of Rome. The growth of the small society brought it into collision with other communities. The wars which followed ended favourably to the Romans, and the conquered districts were incorporated with the original state. The absorption of these conquests was followed by others, the geographical limits of the state extending, and its aggressive strength increasing, with each new victory; until in course of time the whole of Italy had become welded into one state. Concurrently with this process, an important change was taking place in the internal structure of the state and in the mutual relations between its members. The early community had consisted of a small population enjoying a large measure of independence, following the lead of its chiefs, but claiming and maintaining a practically equal voice in the common affairs. The subjugation of neighbouring races brought within the limits of the state a considerable number possessing no political rights. In its early years the relative weakness of Rome made it politic to admit the conquered with little restriction into the full citizenship of the state; but in later times, as its power increased, it exercised a more despotic control over its subject peoples. It became the centre to which flowed, not only their tribute, but large numbers of their people as prisoners of war to wear the yoke of slavery to their new masters. There quickly grew up in Rome a wealthy class who arrogated to them-

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selves an ever greater share of the ruling power. Below them was a mass of free citizens growing more and more economically dependent on the class above ; and who, though retaining the form of a share in the government, steadily lost the substance of that power, political liberty fading away as economic independence withered. Below them again lay an ever-growing mass of slave population, both politically and economically powerless. The growth of empire continually lessened the gulf which separated these two classes ; till in the height of their imperial glory the Roman people lay helpless under an absolute despotism.

The emergence of an idle wealthy class changed also the character of the wars in which the state was involved. They ceased to be mainly necessary wars, compelled by the demands of self-preservation. Their main cause was soon the cupidity and self-gratification of the ruling class. The excitement of war, the lust of power, the tedium of idle luxury, conspired to attract many of the upper class to a life of martial adventure : while an inordinate love of display, of magnificent palaces, of gorgeous shows, drove the rest to incite and support aggressive wars in order that the spoils might provide the means to maintain their ever-growing luxury. The limits of the empire were rolled back until all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and many more distant, had been brought beneath the yoke of Rome. There grew up in this way

a vast centralised system similar to that of the earlier empires, except perhaps that it rested more upon a dominant class at the centre and less upon a single individual. But as in the case of those earlier empires each increase proved a double source of weakness. The heart was weakened by the indolent luxury which grew as the stream of tributary wealth increased; while the greater remoteness of the theatre of war destroyed their martial spirit, and led to an ever greater dependence on mercenary arms. History repeated itself; and the empire broke up from its own internal weakness and from attacks from outside which it was no longer able to resist. In the words of Gibbon "prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight."

The internal problems which faced the Roman people during the later Empire represented in many ways an intermediate stage between those of their predecessors and those of our own time. The most important problems affecting any society are those concerned with the primary wants of its members—the supply and distribution of food, and security from attack. The vast extent of the Roman Empire, the suppression of war between its different provinces, and the freedom from external attack which the people enjoyed, offered a great encouragement to

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peaceful industry ; and the production of food accordingly increased. At the same time the freedom and facility of intercourse that existed between all parts of the Empire enabled the produce of each province to flow easily and readily to any part in which it was needed. In particular, the city of Rome, with its vast population, was the centre to which flowed a never-ceasing stream from every quarter. The ordinary inducements of trade, which might generally have served to keep the imperial city well supplied, were assisted by the policy of the Emperors, who could not afford to risk the presence of a hungry population at the seat of government. Famine rarely affected the Empire, the accidental scarcity in any single province being immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours. The remoter provinces in times of scarcity suffered from the insistent demands of the Central Government ; but on the whole the supply of food was far more abundant and more uniformly distributed under the wide and well organised government of the Empire than among the earlier and less advanced states.

The efficient distribution of food is, if anything, of ~~even~~ more importance to the general well-being than its relative abundance ; while the problem of such distribution has increased in difficulty as the race has advanced in civilisation. As we have seen, in the simplest condition of human society, each individual had free access

to the source of food, and produced his own food by his own labour. In the next stage the great majority of the people were still food producers, a small number only—the chief and his immediate circle—being non-producers. Distribution in that case was simple and efficient; the chief took what he needed from the producers, the relatively large number of the latter preventing any serious inconvenience from that species of appropriation. The progress of society was marked by a steadily increasing percentage of food-consumers who were not food-producers. These consisted at first of dependents or retainers of the wealthy. They drew their sustenance from their patrons, who in turn took it from the producers either by purchase or force according to circumstances. Distribution was still complete. Later still there grew up an intermediary class—artisans of various kinds—who were neither producers of food, nor directly associated with the wealthy class. Food could only reach them through the hands of the wealthy classes or the government, or by the exchange of the products of their industry for the food they needed. In early industrial times, before machine production had made its appearance, the production of hand labour could not to any appreciable extent exceed the demand for such articles, nor was there much difficulty for the individual to change from one kind of labour to another. Under such circumstances unemployment (inability to sell one's labour) was rare, and as a consequence

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food distribution was relatively complete. The conditions of food distribution under the Empire exhibited an intermediate stage between the last two of the above states. There was still a vast non-producing population consisting of the slaves or dependents of the wealthy, who were supplied with food by their masters. There was, however, a considerable class in the cities who were mainly dependent on the sale of their labour. For the most part they found little difficulty in so obtaining the necessities of life; and such deficiencies as occurred were met by distributions of corn by the government. In our own time, as we shall see, this class has enormously increased, and the acuteness of the problem of distribution (or employment) become in like degree aggravated and intense.

The personal security of the people of the Roman Empire showed also a considerable advance over the conditions of earlier times. Individual liberty still lay to a very great extent at the mercy of other individuals, whether in the power of the master over his slaves, of the patron over his dependents, or the government over the general body of the people; but the system of law and the practice of equity had introduced a very considerable restraint over that individual power, so that in most matters the conduct of the individual was regulated by the written law, and invasions of the rights of others was checked or punished by the supreme power of the State.

We may gather from these facts that in the

heyday of the Empire the condition of the race as far as the primary wants were concerned showed a marked advance over earlier times; although the inherent weakness of the Empire itself left that improvement open to serious attack, or possibly complete destruction when the Empire itself collapsed.

If the growing organisation and power of the Empire had resulted in a more abundant and uniform supply of the primary wants of mankind, it had brought a far more striking increase in the secondary wants, whose insistent demands were doing much to destroy the advantages which the closer organisation of society had provided. The rapid growth of the Empire, its wide extent, the dominant power which had reduced innumerable peoples to subjection, had created a wealthy class who, freed from the necessity of labour, sought gratification in lavish expenditure. Each individual of that class was surrounded by a troop of domestics and retainers, and a host of artisans and others who ministered to their pleasures or supplied their wants. In the words of Gibbon, "Under the Roman Empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality." The insatiable craving for these objects of self-gratification grew faster

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than the wealth necessary to supply them ; and the ever unsatisfied demand was in large measure the occasion which carried the arms and the trade of Rome to every quarter of the known world. It is easy to understand that the collection of a great non-producing population at the heart of the Empire, in great degree dependent upon more or less reluctant supplies from remote provinces, threatened serious trouble should those provinces at any time fall away, and the idle classes no longer enjoy the wealth that had once flowed from them. The whole system of Rome was in fact in a condition of unstable equilibrium, and the vast dependent population at the centre formed a fulcrum by whose means the whole structure might easily be overthrown. Yet as we have seen this extraordinary inequality in the distribution of wealth, with its attendant evils, was the natural outcome of the self-regarding instinct in the individual ; and in Rome we have but another instance of the inherent weakness of any society, great or small, in which the individualist character of the people is not checked by a real and effective social instinct.

The position of woman in relation to the man affords on the whole a just measure of the progress the society has made in what we call civilisation. As we have seen, among the earliest human beings the woman was an altogether inferior animal, held at the disposal of the man by mere force, subject entirely to his will, the helpless

victim of his tyranny and brutality. In the early social period a certain self-restraint, some degree of mutual consideration, grew up between the male members of the society, mainly as a consequence of the fact that the existence of the community depended largely on the co-operation of the men, while the strength of the adult males made the results of attack too hazardous to be lightly undertaken. None of these considerations weighed in the case of the women; and such improvement as took place in their condition was in the main an indirect result of the modification of the character of the males under the influence of social life, and little, if at all, due to the woman's own demand for better treatment. The instinctive subjection of woman, her inferiority to man, remained (and remains) long after the refinements of social life had put an end to the violence and brutality of the male, and had even surrounded her with an atmosphere of exaggerated reverence and respect.

During the greater part of the life of the Roman Republic the legal inferiority of the woman was complete. "Her behaviour was approved, or censured, or chastised, according to the husband's judgment or caprice. He exercised the jurisdiction of life and death and it was allowed that in the cases of adultery or drunkenness the sentence might be properly inflicted. She acquired and inherited for the sole profit of her lord; and so clearly was woman defined, not as a person, but as a thing, that if the original

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title were deficient she might be claimed like other movables by the *use* and possession of an entire year" (Gibbon). In the later days of Rome, women secured some measure of independence as regards property, and some approach to equality with the man in the conditions of the matrimonial contract ; but this advance in the legal position of woman could not survive the fall of Rome ; and the legal incapacity of woman thereafter remained unchallenged for many centuries.

The mental condition of the Roman people marks a substantial advance on their predecessors. The ignorance of the common people was intense, their positive knowledge (the fruits of education) infinitesimal. The mental capacity of a whole people is not, however, co-terminous with the mental achievements of the normal individual ; but is better measured by the mental achievements of that section of the people whose circumstances have been favourable to such pursuits. We may, therefore, judge the degree of advance in the mental evolution of man at the period of Roman power, by looking at the actual mental activities of the educated classes. Judged by that test, that period fell little below our own. There existed an almost inexhaustible literature. The luxuriant fancy of its poets, and the bold speculations of its philosophers, alike indicated a restless activity in the mental world that established a great advance upon the past, and held out the hope of a still more striking advance in the future.

Positive scientific knowledge was of small amount ; but speculation, the blind groping after knowledge, must come before its actual achievement ; and at no period of history can we find so keen an interest in philosophic speculations of all kinds, so many daring adventures into the most secret recesses of nature. There is little doubt that had the Roman civilisation been more stable in character, those extraordinary discoveries in the scientific world which are constantly dazzling us to-day would centuries ago have become the commonplaces of the Western World.

In all branches of human affairs this lofty mental advance made itself apparent. In the field of law it had produced a jurisprudence which forms the foundation of our own ; while it had built up a refined and elaborate system, through whose intricacies none but the expert lawyer could find his way.

In religion also the inquiring mind of the philosopher had faced the deeply-rooted beliefs which had long since become an instinct in the race, and had cast those superstitions aside as unworthy the rational man. Among the common people, the old beliefs still held their position ; but even among them the reality of the old gods was growing dim though not directly challenged, and religion itself was becoming less a genuine belief than a mere routine of forms and ceremonies.

In all these things the Roman people showed a considerable advance over earlier peoples, but

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the whole change was essentially evolutionary. The Roman system in all its many aspects was but the outgrowth of more primitive systems, developing under the influence of the fundamental qualities of living matter.



CHAPTER X

BRITAIN UNDER THE SAXONS AND NORMANS

THE Roman Empire, like its predecessors, went down under the attack of barbarians dwelling on or beyond its borders. The results of that invasion, or rather series of invasions, which brought the fabric of the Roman Empire to ruin, were far less destructive than similar attacks upon the earlier empires we have already considered. An enormous proportion of the people of the Western World had long been under the influence of Roman institutions ; while the invaders themselves had been habituated to the conditions of a settled and orderly system of government. The fall of the Roman Empire brought mainly a change in the masters of the people, and destroyed some of the more superficial characteristics of Roman life ; but it left the instincts and habits of the great mass of the people in the main untouched. As the people had acquired the principal qualities necessary to settled government, the shattered fragments, like the severed limbs of some organism, quickly reshaped themselves into organised societies, whose general features resembled those of the society of whose materials they were formed,

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modified or varied in the cases of the more remote parts of the Empire by such local peculiarities of the people as still survived from pre-Roman times.

For some centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire the history of Europe presents a picture of chaos and disorder difficult to unravel. The various nations that after a time emerged from the obscurity are alike in the root features of social life, but many variations appeared in the habits of the people, and in their political and industrial systems, which in time seemed to establish a permanent diversity in their national characters. It would serve little purpose to trace these variations in the different countries of Europe at the present time. The essential problems that face all Western peoples differ little in character; and it will therefore serve if we follow the evolution of the race and its problems in the case of England only.

Britain had been in some respects more fortunate than other provinces of the Empire. A long and bloody struggle had inspired a sufficient terror of the Roman arms; but when that result was once achieved Britain enjoyed a long period of comparative peace, little affected by the wars and commotions that troubled the less remote quarters of the Empire in the many internecine struggles for the Imperial purple. The old warlike and independent spirit of the ancient Britons had gone, and under the influence of the new conditions the natives, "disarmed, dispirited

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and submissive, had lost all desire and even idea of their former liberty and independence" (Hume).

After nearly four centuries, the Roman eagles were finally withdrawn to resist the growing pressure on the heart of the Empire. The Britons, left to their own resources, and wanting those virile qualities which had distinguished their ancestors, fell an easy prey to invaders, first to the Picts and Scots (who themselves lacked the qualities for a permanent subjugation of the Britons), and later to the Saxons. As in the case of all barbarous nations the invaders sought to secure their supremacy by wholesale slaughter; and the Saxons, who might have established themselves peacefully in the country of the lethargic Britons, forced the latter to take up arms as the only alternative to death. The seven Saxon kingdoms were not established until after more than a century of almost incessant war, waged in most parts of the country to the point of extermination. The result of this merciless treatment of the natives was the almost complete destruction of their institutions, and the introduction of the Saxon political system, simplified into practical absolutism under the pressure of constant war. The incessant resort to arms—war with the Britons being followed by conflicts between the Saxons themselves—effectually prevented any improvement in the arts or social institutions of the people; and it was not till the final union of the Heptarchy under Egbert in

827 that any marked advance in the conditions of life can be traced.

The internal disorders of the country, and the incessant attacks of the Danes, did much to unsettle the character of the people, and to weaken in them the instincts of submission to authority which generations of subjection had bred in them. Under Alfred the Great, however, the country enjoyed a considerable degree of tranquillity; and under his influence the people acquired more settled habits. The structure of society became more clearly defined; while various institutions—social, judicial, etc.—moulded on the Saxon example, were established throughout the country.

In view of the fact that the invading Saxons exterminated or expelled most of the Britons, reduced the remainder to servitude, and transplanted into England the habits and institutions of their native country, the general condition of the Saxon race acquires special importance in any attempt to trace the evolution of modern England. The influence of Roman civilisation on the Britons was practically swept away by the flood of the Saxon invasions; and the real foundation on which the later character and institutions of the English people were built must be looked for in Saxon Germany.

The earlier Saxons in Germany were mainly a pastoral people, whose wealth consisted chiefly in their cattle. Agriculture was of a very primitive type, while refinement and the arts were entirely

unknown. We have already seen what must be the general condition of the people in a country addicted to such pursuits. A centralised government holding sway over a wide area is impossible. The general state is a tribal one, the numbers of each society being relatively small, and the position of the adult males for the most part equal. The chief was but a first among equals, the fierce bold spirit of such a people being unsuited to the yoke of any arbitrary power. The general concerns of the small community were settled by the voices of all the men. In later times, before the period of the Saxon invasion of Britain, the growing population, by confining the various communities to their own special territories, and by causing more frequent intercourse between those communities, had led to more settled habits, and consequently to a more clearly defined organisation in the social structure. The leading men became distinguished from the general body of the people by their wealth and influence; and although the latter were jealous of their freedom, they came in time to feel towards the former class an instinctive regard and respect. The more settled mode of life made the institution of slavery possible; while the warlike character of the people, holding in contempt all occupation but that of arms, made slavery inevitable, the slave being a prisoner of war or the descendant of such, exercising no voice in the affairs of the state, subject to the will of the freemen, and compelled to undertake the work of husbandry, and

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to perform the various tasks which the warrior despised. At the time of the Saxon invasion there accordingly existed in Germany these three classes, the nobles, the freemen, and the slaves ; and it was this political system that the Saxons brought into England.

The vast and incessant warlike operations involved in the Saxon inroads into Britain resulted in the steady aggrandisement of the nobles, and the equally steady degradation of the freemen. The distinction between freeman and slave grew steadily less, until it was difficult to find any class between the nobles and those dependent on them. Nor is the reason of this unfortunate change difficult to trace. The conduct of an invasion of a state far removed from their own, the necessity of maintaining themselves in face of a hostile and numerous population, must have forced upon the invaders, relatively small in numbers, a stricter discipline, a more unquestioning obedience to the leader, than they would otherwise have tolerated. Dissension spelled disaster ; and the instinct of self-preservation was sufficient to induce the rank and file to surrender much of their liberty to their own leaders as the only alternative to its complete loss at the hands of the common enemy. The power of the leader steadily increased ; and as the same state of hostilities continued for long periods there grew up among the general body of the people a habit of subjection to their leaders, which ended in the loss of all desire for that

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liberty which had once been their most jealously guarded privilege. Here, as in other times, successful war led to the subjection of the conquerors as well as of the conquered. The lands of the defeated lay at the absolute disposal of the successful chief. Of those lands part was retained by himself, and part distributed among his leading men. The country thus became divided between the king and the nobles. They drew their maintenance from these lands by renting them to the freemen, and partly by cultivating them by means of slaves, the number of the latter rapidly increasing as a result of the incessant war. In the loose social organisation of those days, the weakness of the central authority, the difficulty of intercommunication, the nobles exercised practically absolute power in their own districts. The landed aristocracy acquired in this way an influence over the people, and the people an instinct of obedience to them, which generations of like conditions confirmed, and which the vast changes in these later times have failed to destroy.

As regards the general condition of the people during the Saxon ascendancy it may be noticed that there were no towns of any magnitude in the country. There was but little industry or trade beyond agriculture, and in the latter pursuit the great body of the people were engaged. Unemployment in the modern sense was practically non-existent. It cannot exist where men are politically slaves since it is to the owner's interests to provide the man with an opportunity of labour.

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Such of the people as were not employed in husbandry found subsistence as members of the vast hordes of servants and retainers who lived a lazy and licentious existence about the houses of the nobles. There was no middle class of any appreciable extent; and the nobles enjoyed none of those luxuries and experienced few of the secondary wants that became so prominent a feature among them in Norman times. They maintained no great castles or gorgeous palaces. Their houses were of the most primitive kind, distinguished only by their size and the lavish abundance of food.

The age was essentially a barbarous one. Of refinement there was none. The people generally were licentious, with little sense of honour or morality. This state of things is natural enough in a society where the people have still hardly left the stage of pure individualism, and where comparative security from attack and general sufficiency of food have rendered unnecessary those habits of vigilance, of activity, and of self-discipline common in savage tribes which are faced with the constant danger of attack. A certain primitive code of laws existed, every offence having its appropriate pecuniary penalty. In such an age these laws, administered by courts under the influence of the nobles, must have been practically inoperative so far as the latter were concerned; but they no doubt tended to regulate the conduct of the mass of the people, and to breed in them some habit of regard for, and obedience to, the law of the

land, which is a necessary condition to the existence of any orderly and progressive society.

As might be expected, the social instinct was but little developed among the people. The instinct of self-regard was still unchallenged. It was that which lay at the root of the Saxon's love of liberty. It was that which prompted his invasion of Britain ; which led him to subjection to his chief ; which reduced him later to the position of a serf, subject to the unrestrained authority of the noble whose power so far exceeded his own. It was the instinct of self-regard which made it possible for the noble with his body of retainers to hold in absolute subjection a whole countryside, whose population was numerous enough to have swept the oppressors away like chaff had they been capable of common action. As the man felt little real concern for his neighbour, except so far as injury to his neighbour suggested the probability of like injury to himself, so he saw his neighbour fall a victim to the licence or violence of the noble and his retainers with indifference. This is the melancholy condition to which pure individualism reduces a society where circumstances have held the people in subjection for any length of time. Common action in self-defence is impossible. The superiority of the noble is measured by the extent to which his power exceeds the power of the individual. Rebellion of the common people against their tyrants is out of the question. They lack the sense of common interests which can alone

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make possible any continued resistance to authority. The more ardent spirits, powerless against the despot, fly to the woods to swell the army of freebooters who maintain themselves there. The mass of the people are, however, helpless as oxen, chewing the cud in dull content till it pleases their masters to lead them to the slaughter.

This was the general condition to which England was reduced under the Saxon kings. The invading Danes and Normans found a people broken, dispirited, indifferent to liberty, careless of a change of masters. The resistance to the invaders rested with the nobles and their retainers ; and this fact explains the relative ease with which the invaders overran and subjected so great and populous a country.

The question of religion under the Saxon kings may be left for the present. The progress of religion and its institutions in Europe from the time of the later Roman Empire is more continuous and uniform than was the case with political and social institutions. It was not subject to such catastrophic changes as marked the Saxon and Norman invasions. Its power was continuous and growing, and may be best dealt with later in a general review of the influence of religion in directing the evolution of humanity and its problems during this period.

The Norman invasion which put an end to that long period of disturbance and foreign aggression was more important in its ultimate

effects than in any immediate influence upon the general condition of the people. The Normans brought with them new ideas of government, new traditions, and new habits of life; but to the great mass of the people the change was again nothing but a change of masters. They remained still subject—slaves for all practical purposes—to the new owners of the soil; and all that was said of their condition under the Saxon kings applied in all essentials to the period of Norman rule. The absolute power of the Conqueror, who found himself free to dispose of the land of the country as seemed best to him; the natural tendency of the crowd of hungry invaders to dispossess the original proprietors even where, through reasons of policy, they had not at first been disturbed; the feudal system which was transplanted from the Continent;—all helped to deprive the commoner of the last shred of right to any of the land of his native country. Lacking as he did all opportunity of self-maintenance, and depending for his livelihood upon the will of the noble, he sank to a position of complete and helpless subjection, scorned by his alien masters, and regarded by them solely as part of the spoils of war. Sunk as the people were in the densest ignorance, condemned to the most meagre existence, forced to remain always in one locality, and subject to the irresponsible violence of their masters, there seemed little hope that the future would bring any improvement in their wretched lot. Yet the very strength and pride of the

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Norman nobility, which seemed the insuperable obstacle to the advance of the common people, were the main causes of the improvements that subsequently took place. The strength of the new nobility not only lessened the internal disorders which vexed the country under weaker rulers, but secured it from the incessant ravages which had hitherto rendered any substantial progress impossible. The common people too, though subject to the almost unchecked will of their masters, were compelled to conduct themselves with due regard to the interests of their fellows. The pride of the nobility, as it led them to maintain enormous retinues, to indulge in lavish display, and during the later period of the Norman kings to undertake costly expeditions, so it forced them to encourage the industry of the country by which alone their extravagant and growing needs could be satisfied. The towns increased in size and number; commerce and industry began to make headway; and the people of the towns, so valuable to kings and nobles as accumulators of wealth, slowly secured for themselves a consideration which the common people could hardly otherwise have obtained.

There is one important, nay vital, distinction between urban and rural populations which may be noted here, and which is all that need detain us in the Norman period.

A rural life under the conditions of these times does little to stimulate the social instinct; a town life inevitably does much. Nor need we experi-

ence any difficulty in understanding the reason of that distinction. The fundamental character of every living organism is individualistic, self-regarding. That primary character accounts for the whole activities of the lower forms of organic life ; and, by way of instinct, it occupies most of the life of the highest. The secondary qualities, of which the social instinct is the most important, are the result of environment acting through the functional memory. In the case of the serf this social instinct has little opportunity of growth. His life is devoted to the monotonous round of agricultural labour. His mind is almost inert. Void of all power of initiative, compelled to obey the orders of his lord, unarmed and helpless in the face of that overwhelming power, living either alone or in very small village communities, and working from sunrise to sunset, he retained much of the bovine character of his oxen ; and if at times some faint shadow of sympathy with his fellows crossed his mind, the utter hopelessness of any resistance prevented those attempts at revolt which might in time have created a real and powerful bond between those victims of tyranny. Nor was it possible in such weak and isolated communities to induce any common action against the overlord. The rash individual who ventured to raise his voice against the system of oppression quickly adorned a gallows. Moreover, it should be remembered that the people had acquired an instinct of submission. Many generations of arbitrary power in the few had implanted in the

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many the habit of submission to their lords and masters ; and as time and custom added strength to this character in the governed they lost the very conception of any freer existence, regarding the tyranny of the nobles as much in the course of nature as the storms and floods which also had to be put up with. Such a people could not be said to constitute a class. They were but a mass of isolated units, whose only common bond was a traditional attachment to some master. They possessed no power of revolt as a class against their condition as a class. They had no sense of class interests. As individuals they could hardly rise above a dull and senseless content, or an equally dull and senseless discontent. History gives no instance of any real rebellion among such people in such a time. Exceptional distress might at times overcome their habitual submission, and common hate of the oppressor lead to apparently common action against him. Such explosions were rare, and also hopeless. There was little or none of that real sympathy between the people which could have led to continuous mutual action, and have induced individual sacrifices for the common cause. The melting force was individualistic and not social ; and as the rebel was animated by his own self-regard and its consequent hatred of his oppressor, and cared little or nothing for his fellows, the first reverse scattered the rebels like sheep. It was sufficient for the master to administer a short and bloody lesson, to hang a few, to secure for himself a long

period of security from any repetition of the revolt. On the other hand the rural population, attached from time immemorial to the service of their particular ruler, and lacking any ties or interests outside their own locality, followed their local chief in all his enterprises without considering the object of those enterprises, or troubling about their possible consequence to themselves. Long habit had turned this attachment to the chief into an instinct ; and we find as a result that the peasant, who had little or no power of self-sacrifice on behalf of his fellows, could follow his chief enthusiastically, and die for him unhesitatingly. The peasantry in such times are powerless to rebel as a class against their chiefs ; but in the revolts of their chiefs they provide them with a force of incomparable strength. The history of the reigns following the Norman settlement provide ample evidence of this fact ; and the remarkable vitality of this characteristic in the people is manifest to anyone at all conversant with the instincts and prejudices of the rural population to-day.

Urban life has a very different effect on the people. There are many reasons why town life should greatly modify the character of the man. He is, for example, removed from the immediate neighbourhood of his overlord ; and the habit of submission insensibly weakens in the absence of that ever-dominating force. The centre of the man's world is no longer some great noble who towers above every other individual as a mountain overtops a molehill ; and whose will, backed by a

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resistless and unrestrained force, compels obedience from all. New influences come into the man's life, and occupy his thoughts. The noble appears rather as an external force than as the centre round which the whole life of the neighbourhood congregated. The constant presence of the noble's agents, the periodic payment of rent, and the ever-present fact that a word of the landowner would eject the peasant from his land and leave him to starve by the wayside, no longer weighed upon the townsman ; and, although the ingrained habit of many generations could not be destroyed till generations of new circumstances had built up more powerful instincts opposed to it, still the growing consciousness of independence of the noble compelled the latter to rely more on his actual force than on the influence of long habit, and tended to regularise the relations between town and noble, replacing the arbitrary exactions of rural times by a more or less determinate tribute. The traditional influence of the noble was by degrees transferred to the merchants and other leaders of town life. Moreover, in the case of the agricultural worker, his labour for the most part went direct into the soil, and his sustenance came to him direct from it. His fellows might get their living in a similar way, but they lay outside the area of his necessities.. They were incidents in his existence, rather than essential to it. It was possible for him to live without associating with them in any way, and his fellow-peasants consequently exercised comparatively

little influence over him. In the town, however, it was otherwise. There it was impossible for the man to dwell in isolation. He could not extract his living from nature single-handed. His livelihood could only be obtained by association with his fellows. Whether he sat in a shop and sold goods to customers, or made articles for sale, or worked with others in the employ of a master ; or, as a master, employed others ; whatever his method of obtaining the necessities of existence, he was brought constantly into contact with his fellows, depended for his success in large degree on their goodwill, suffered in his own welfare when the others suffered, felt with them the exactions or attacks of the nobles, and was equally interested in repelling them. The work of the rustic, long though his hours might be, was a regular round, following the seasons year after year, provoking no competition since he commonly worked for another in return for bare subsistence, and had no opportunity of exchanging into more remunerative employ. The townsman, however, was not subject to these somnolent influences. His work commonly demanded certain special training ; he was open to the competition of others in like employ ; and his success depended not only upon the intrinsic quality of his work, but upon his quickness in adapting his labour to the special requirements of his customers. Again, the rustic, after his long day in the fields, if not too exhausted, could only meet with others whose mode of life, habits and traditions, were identical with his own.

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Intercourse with them tended rather to deepen and intensify his prejudices than to awaken any desire of change, and could do nothing to broaden his mental outlook or supply him with new ideas upon which his mind might have worked. Besides, had any man expressed ideas not in accordance with the interests of the chief, he would promptly have been silenced. The townsman, on the other hand, was almost compelled by his situation to mix with his fellows in his hours of leisure. He met at such times men in various circumstances, of diverse characters, and possibly strange experiences. The events of his own life and theirs must have formed the common subject of their conversation. The hardships or injustice suffered by any individual or class was talked of and discussed; and this constant criticism of present circumstances could not fail to put ideas into their minds, to fill them with aspirations, to which the bucolic dweller in the fields must ever have remained a stranger. Again it may be noted that as population increased, and it became more difficult for the disaffected to find security in the woods and forests, they turned naturally to the towns where they could find shelter from the resentment of the noble whose authority they had defied. The best and most progressive spirits of the country-side accordingly swelled the ranks of the townsman, strengthened his spirit of independence, stimulated his tendency to revolt, added to the mental life of the town; and, by the same deed, left the rural districts so much the poorer

and more hopeless. By their commerce and industries the towns became the centres of wealth. As markets or ports the stranger was ever within their gates ; and a constant stream from the outer world flowed through them, bringing the ideas, habits and customs of other parts, and keeping the minds of the people alive, making them more receptive to new ideas and less attached to mere traditions. The towns, too, were geographically distinct communities, employed in ways quite different from the country districts about them ; not seldom shut off from the country by a wall ; governed by their own civic authorities, with their own courts administering a much more impartial justice than could be found in the nobles' courts in the country.

These features of town life, with many others, tended to produce in the man a habit of association. The society of his fellows became not only the common condition of his working hours, but the chief source of his recreation. Working side by side with them, joining constantly in their sports and pleasures, perceiving daily their good or evil fortune, he acquired by degrees some power of sympathy with his fellow townsmen, of sharing their feelings, which had not come to the sparse population of the rural districts. It is this power of sympathy, of common feeling, that lies at the root of the social instinct, the secondary human quality by which the man experiences an impulse to action for the sake of others.

We shall find that from this time onwards the

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centre of gravity of human affairs shifts from the country to the town. It is to the extension of town life that most of the problems of modern life are due. It is largely due to the fact that man has become a town-dweller that he has made so many advances in science and the arts, that he has achieved so great a measure of liberty, that he has begun to shake off the chains of tradition and superstition—and also that millions of his kind are reduced to practical slavery, and to a hopeless wretchedness that never stained the rural populations of older times. Town life has brought to him many advantages, and has weighted him with many a curse. The ill results are due to the individualistic instinct of the man-animal acting in the favourable circumstances of an urban population ; and to compensate the race for this unkindness town life has done most to call into being and to stimulate the social instinct on which the future well-being of the race so greatly depends.

CHAPTER XI

BRITAIN—TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE period from these early Norman times to the end of the eighteenth century may be regarded as one step, though a long and important one, in the onward march of humanity. The Norman Conquest was the last occasion on which a foreign people established themselves in England, and introduced a distinct body of customs and traditions. It was the last "catastrophic" variation in the general circumstances of the English people; and subsequent changes in their character and institutions have been evolutionary, varying from moment to moment by imperceptible degrees under the influence of changing conditions.

The principal fact of this long period is the appearance of a great Middle Class, allied to the general class of workers by birth, but tending more and more to a union with the Upper Class in interests. The effect of this new class upon the workers has been almost beyond expression; and its origin and progress are consequently deserving of close attention.

It is as well to recall the main features of human nature as they have been traced in the foregoing pages. Man is a living organism. His funda-

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mental or primary quality is individualism, the instinct of self-maintenance. His most powerful impulses in his primitive state are the craving for food, and the desire to satisfy his sexual instincts. His character, apart from the above primary qualities, is formed through his functional memory, and is therefore the general result of the conditions under which he has lived. For countless generations in his earlier history, the presence of another was a continual threat, endangering his opportunity of gratifying those two primary desires. The experiences of these early ages left an almost indelible mark on the character of mankind ; and we find throughout history among his most prominent qualities, indifference to the absent stranger, and hatred or fear of the present stranger. The individualism of the animal appeared in the man as anti-socialism ; and through the whole of the period we are now considering this individualistic feature of human character played a dominating part.

The towns, though disliked by king and nobles as being less amenable to control than the helpless and divided peasantry, were permitted, and even encouraged, to grow owing to their special capacity as wealth producers. The over-class in all ages, being free from the necessity of continual labour, have acquired certain other wants in addition to mere food and shelter. Man had inherited from his ancestors a natural inclination to the activities of war and the chase. These occupations, once the sole business of the males, had remained the

special mark of manliness and honour when the advent of agriculture rendered them less necessary. It is but natural that the over-class should turn to war or the hunting-field (the only activities they had practised, and the only ones they held in honour) as a relief from the complete idleness they must otherwise have endured. The exercise of these faculties became habitual pleasures, and the demand for this species of gratification grew as imperative as the primary demand for food. These secondary wants in the over-class led them to maintain large retinues for these special purposes, their support being forced from the helpless mass of the under-class, who were compelled to till the land and surrender to the overlord the whole of the fruits beyond the barest necessities of existence. These secondary wants grew with the means of gratifying them. The noble with a small circle of retainers sought to increase their number, partly as a means of self-gratification, partly from jealousy or fear of others of his kind. Wealth, the power to maintain those large followings, became an object of display as an indication of the strength or position of its owner. The chief accordingly endeavoured not only to increase his retinue, but also to display on his own person, and in the appointments of his servants and his house, as much evidence of wealth as circumstances would permit. The nobles competed with each other, each striving to conduct to the field of war the greatest number of gorgeously equipped knights,

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or to display in the castle or the chase the most luxurious extravagance.

It is evident that the extent of this waste must be very limited in a purely rural district where the surplus production of the worker consisted of little more than food. The noble might under such circumstances maintain a rude though lavish hospitality, but display could go no further.

The rise of the towns provided a growing store of wealth to meet these demands. While their developed industries provided articles of greater magnificence, their commerce brought from far countries strange products both for food and display. The over-class looked upon this wealth and found that it was good, and accordingly permitted the towns to continue. The acquisition of this wealth necessitated great labour and enterprise; and as these would not be undertaken if all the fruits were to be snatched by others, a substantial portion of this wealth was left in the coffers of those who acquired it.

The towns increased in wealth and importance; and there grew up within them a body of men, merchants and other leaders of industry, who became possessed of great substance and influence. At the same time, the over-class began to maintain establishments in the towns where the Court commonly resided, and their affairs in the country were left more and more in the hands of factors and agents; or the land was entrusted for a fixed rent to the more capable of the peasantry.

We thus find as one consequence of the growing

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towns a wealthy middle class arising both in town and country, having no share in the government, but receiving special consideration from the wealth and influence they had acquired. The middle class was drawn from the ranks of the under class. They were, however, for the most part the most capable and enterprising of that class who, with the permission of the over-class, utilised the workers as means of obtaining wealth which they, the middle class, shared by compulsion with their over-lords. The former, though acting solely under the spur of self-regard, were in effect agents of the landowners in exploiting the workers; the landowners remaining the real masters of both.

This Middle Class evolved. It was no sudden creation. At first the employer worked with his men, mixing with them daily, hardly distinguishable from them in his circumstances. The progress of industry and commerce, however, brought a more complex, a more highly organised industrial system; and as the change took place, the gulf between employer and employed widened, till at length they had little or nothing in common beyond the contract between them. "What a pity," one might say, "that when this new source of wealth came into existence all those connected with it had not joined together to share the fruits in some due proportion!" The thought creates a pleasing picture of a flood of material prosperity flowing over the towns, shared by all; and from the towns finding its way into the remotest corner

of the country-side. The human nature of the time was against so satisfactory a consummation. The leading characteristic of the townsman like his rustic brother was self-regard; his main impulse the desire to satisfy his wants. The social instinct was far too faint to modify appreciably this great motive of self. The growing wealth of the merchant quickly found an outlet in a flood of secondary wants, which tended ever to grow with the means of gratifying them. They were not, as with the noble, war and the chase. Long generations of oppression had stifled that early instinct in the man. His faculties were devoted to commerce. Its pursuit filled his mind; and one of his chief pleasures came to be the market, as the noble's had come to be the hunting-field, with the additional advantage that that species of recreation tended to increase instead of scattering his wealth. The merchant also yielded to the desire for display; although that desire was strictly subordinated to his commercial interests. He built for himself a great house, and filled it with servants, and articles of use or ornament drawn from all quarters of the globe. The hospitality of the noble in the country found a counterpart in the banquets of the city. The gorgeous apparel of the court was rivalled by the extravagant and costly dress of the merchant's wife and household. These secondary wants of the merchant and employer differed in nature from those of the noble, as the men's habits and traditions differed; but they

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concurred in one thing, viz.: in provoking an insatiable demand for the wealth on which their gratification depended.

We have thus in the towns a middle class of employers, and a lower class of wage-earners, each, self-regardingly, seeking satisfaction of its wants. Those wants could only be supplied out of the common produce of the commerce or industry in which all were engaged; and employer and employed, under the spur of the individualistic instinct common to them both, sought to obtain as great a share of that produce as possible. This state of antagonism became more prominent as the gulf between masters and men widened; while the superior intelligence and ability of the former, combined with their economic advantage, enabled them for the most part to secure the victory.

The rise of a middle class possessing wealth, and seeking gratification from it, led to progress in the arts and sciences. As their ships carried back reports from all quarters of the globe, and brought to the knowledge of the people the habits and traditions, the ideas and achievements of other nations, so this new stimulus to thought brought into existence a class of writers and thinkers who built up between them a literature in which was reflected every side of human character and experience. Thought provokes thought; and the exercise of the mental faculties brings to them additional power and strength. The towns were further distinguished from the

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country by this new mental life ; and in the less martial times, the Court of the Sovereign became as famous for the luxurious fancies of its poets, as for the valour and pride of its knights. The pen, however, proved itself in the long run more powerful than the sword.

During the greater part of this period the power and influence of the merchants of the towns rested on their money-bags, and the numbers of the town population whose actions they could direct. Kings and nobles in their frequent disputes found in the dignitaries of the towns valuable allies ; and the latter were able in return for their services to one party or the other, to secure for themselves valuable privileges leading to ever greater freedom to manage their own affairs, and restricting and defining the exactions which the governing powers could make upon them.

It may be noted that this action on the part of the merchants was not dictated by any sense of equality with the nobles. Long use had bred in the people an instinct of inferiority to their chiefs ; and the leaders of commerce and industry, who were sprung from the people, could not easily discard that instinct. The deeply-rooted nature of such instincts is well illustrated in this ; for even to-day the Middle Class regard the Upper Class with a respect and reverence, with an abiding sense of inferiority, which nothing in their present circumstances can justify or occasion, and which can only be accounted for by this instinct

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bred into the people during countless generations. The object of the merchants in these early times was not to assert equality, but to secure for themselves freer opportunities of exercising their self-gratifying pursuit of wealth. Their greater freedom from interference brought a rapid increase in their riches ; and this in its turn enabled them to extort further measures of freedom ; and so step by step they secured for themselves a greater voice in the general affairs of the country, till at length they were admitted to a definite place in the legislature. It is interesting to observe that as the influence of the Middle Class depended upon its wealth, and as it was in those times solely concerned politically with its opportunities of acquiring wealth, so the powers of the Middle Class in Parliament have centred round the question of Finance, till that province lies entirely in their hands ; while over all other branches of legislation and government they have enjoyed but limited powers, and their excursions into those fields have to the present day been regarded with the greatest jealousy by the old Ruling Class. Another example of the abiding power of instinct.

Through the whole of the post-Norman period the general attitude of the Middle Class was one of acquiescence in, or even indifference to, political changes, so long as those changes conveyed no threat of danger to their wealth-begetting freedom. On the other hand they consistently advocated changes likely to bring

grist to their mills. They were responsible for most of the wars in which this country was engaged. Apart from the early wars with France, which they undertook either to substantiate claims to possessions in that country or to gratify their martial instincts, the nobles were largely indifferent to foreign conquests. The merchant's eyes, however, were upon all the earth. His ships sailed every sea; his agents journeyed in every clime in the quest for wealth. Reports of the fabulous riches of the Indies filled him with desire. If no European nation had forestalled him he entered into possession. If, on the other hand, he found the prize in the hands of others, Spaniards, French or Dutch, he sought to snatch it from them either by his own small expedition, which we should call piracy, or by means of the armed forces of the country, which we euphemistically call war. In this restless, insatiable quest for gold what cruelties and barbarities was he not guilty of! The destruction of a Spanish fleet, the pillage of a Spanish settlement, and the slaughter of its inhabitants were causes of unalloyed satisfaction. The institution of slavery, with its hideous and untold tortures, found in him a relentless champion. Did not slaves sell for much money, and did they not add to the value of his American plantations? The fact that the negro was a human being had no influence upon him—probably never seriously occurred to him.

The wealth hunter was not content with exploiting the foreigner. He turned with equal

greed upon his fellow countrymen. Labour must be cheap and plentiful, and the labourer must be patient and submissive. And so we find laws enacted with a view to this desirable end. Various statutes of labourers restricted wages. Any attempt by the workers to combine was a conspiracy punished with the severest penalties. Property was the one sacred thing ; and for violation of its rights nothing short of death ! It is suggestive that whereas in earlier times in the country before the era of the Middle Class, all offences could be compounded for by money payments, the rise of the Middle Class brought a growing severity for offences against property till the theft of a few shillings was punished with death, and Tyburn was the constant scene of innumerable executions of men, women and children, for the most trifling thefts. Other offences met with transportation ; and many a shipload of miserable wretches crossed the Atlantic to work under the lash on the plantations of these wealth hunters. Such was the state of things that the unrestrained individualism of industry and commerce brought about—infinately worse, from the nature of its sphere and opportunities, than the tyranny of the old chief in rural districts before the towns with their wealth had introduced these new features into the national life.

On the other hand, let us turn to the condition and character of the lower class. These, too, evolved ; and unfortunately for them the process made them as grain between the upper millstone

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of the landowner, and the nether stone of the employer. Between the two they were ground exceeding small.

In the earliest days of town life there was little or no distinction between master and servant. The numbers of the townsmen too was small, and the products of their industry found a ready market. At such a time the material condition of the town worker was probably equal to that of any class in the country. He worked for himself; or, if for an employer, generally lived with him, sharing the same board, and standing in the position of a friend, if not an equal. Material prosperity in simple times is a great stimulus to population, and as a consequence the numbers in the towns steadily increased. For a long time no serious consequence was felt. The growing industry and expanding commerce provided occupation, while to the adventurous spirits the constant internal and external wars gave ample opportunity. Nevertheless as time went on the close intimacy between masters and men faded away, and the latter became more and more a distinct class of wage-earners living apart from the former and conscious of different interests. Under such circumstances the growing numbers of the population was bound to lead to difficulties. Commerce and industry do not afford so regular and steady a field of employment as agriculture. A foreign war with its vast expenditure, its destruction of commerce, its interference with industry, must occasion great fluctuations in the

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demand for labour ; and an increasing population, which only an expanding commerce could absorb, was subject to periods of contracted employment when the demand for labour fell short of the supply. The modern problem of unemployment began to appear in this intermittent fashion. Moreover, competition, the crowning virtue of the individualist, enabled the employer to obtain his labour at a small price. Many attempts were made, by means of craft guilds and otherwise, to restrict the competition of labour in different trades ; but no such artificial bulwark could permanently withstand the growing pressure of an unattached and unemployed population ; and the guilds in course of time disappeared.

These effects hardly became very prominent till towards the end of our present period. But the circumstances that gave rise to them were continuous in their operation, and produced for the nineteenth century its gravest problems. So far as the lower classes are concerned the whole of this long period is marked by an increasing economic subjection to capital, which proved a more heartless and relentless taskmaster than the nobles had been in their most powerful times. The latter had valued chiefly the exercise of authority ; and although their great establishments and lavish extravagance had confined the peasant to the simple necessities of life, yet they had generally extended to him their protection, and maintained him on the land in return for his submission to their rule. The capitalists, how-

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ever, cared little for mere power. They came from a class that had never exercised it, and they themselves had no means of enforcing or maintaining it. Their main desire was to accumulate wealth; and, provided they could compel the labour of the worker, they were largely indifferent to his condition. The little consideration they had while master and man were fellow-workers, quickly faded away as the widening gulf between capital and labour snapped the ties which intimacy and close personal association had created.

The condition of the worker in the seventeenth century under the unrestrained greed and rapacity of his masters was deplorable in the extreme. The general wage of the agricultural labourer at this time was about four shillings a week without food. Mechanics received generally less than a shilling a day. "If they complained that they could not live on such a pittance they were told they were free to take it or leave it." For this they worked early and late, while their employers became rich by their exertions. Child labour was a common practice. "At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, a little creature of six years old was thought fit for labour. Several writers of that time, and among them some who were considered as eminently benevolent, mention, with exultation, the fact that 'in that single city boys and girls of very tender age created wealth exceeding what was necessary for their own subsistence by twelve thousand pounds a year.'

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‘The great majority of the nation lived almost entirely on rye, barley and oats’” (Macaulay). The miserable condition of the artisan class and the mass of rate-supported wretchedness beneath them was the direct outcome of the advance of commerce and industry controlled by the rising middle class. Little wonder that the labourer looked upon the capitalist as his relentless enemy, and regarded him with a bitterness that the nobles had never called forth, and indeed had never deserved. Not only was the yoke of the capitalist more grievous ; but he had not behind him a long tradition of authority such as the nobles possessed, and which, as in their case, might have given his oppression the appearance of a law of nature. This deep-rooted hostility between capital and labour left a mark that has never been effaced ; and we may find in this an explanation of the distrust the working-class have invariably shown in recent years towards the Whig party, and the readiness with which so many have given their political support to the landed aristocracy.

As a background to the luxury and tyranny of the upper and middle classes, and to the misery and subjection of the lower, we find a general moral, or rather immoral, condition that in these later days appears almost incredible. From the earliest part of this period the character of the people, high and low, was marked by an absence of those gentler virtues, by the want of those manners and rules of conduct born of mutual

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consideration, which we are inclined to regard nowadays as the essential features of civilisation. Licence and debauchery marked all classes. The decencies and refinements of modern life were unknown. The position of woman was degraded in the extreme. She was little more than a beast of burden or an instrument of lust. Even in the highest ranks the same condition prevailed. Moreover, in all quarters there existed a love of cruelty or an indifference to suffering which reflects the character of our animal ancestors. Punishments of the most brutal kinds, tortures and mutilations, were of daily occurrence ; and either afforded amusement to the people, or were regarded as matters of no concern.

The miserable situation of the great body of the labouring classes served only to intensify this element of savagery ; while there was nothing in the easy licence or vicious practices of their superiors to check this by the influence of good example. An eloquent description of the moral state of the seventeenth century is contained in the pages of Macaulay, and furnishes a striking picture of the depravity of those times. " The discipline of workshop, of schools, of private families, though not more efficient than at present, was infinitely harsher. Masters, well born and bred, were in the habit of beating their servants. Husbands of decent station were not ashamed to beat their wives. The implacability of hostile factions was such as we can scarcely conceive. Whigs were disposed to murmur because Stafford

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was suffered to die without seeing his bowels burned before his face. Tories reviled and insulted Russell as his coach passed from the Tower to the Scaffold in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As little mercy was shown by the populace to sufferers of a humbler rank. If an offender was put into the pillory, it was well if he escaped with life from the shower of brickbats and paving stones. If he was tied to the cart's tail the crowd pressed round him, imploring the hangman to give it the fellow well, and make him howl. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure to Bridewell on Court days, for the purpose of seeing the wretched women who beat hemp there whipped. A man pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited less sympathy than is now felt for a galled horse or an overdriven ox. Fights, compared with which a boxing match is a refined and humane spectacle, were among the favourite diversions of a large part of the town. Multitudes assembled to see gladiators hack each other to pieces with deadly weapons, and shouted with delight when one of the combatants lost a finger or an eye. The prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime and of every disease. At the assizes the lean and yellow culprits brought with them from their cells to the dock an atmosphere of stench and pestilence which sometimes avenged them signally on bench, bar and jury. But on all this misery society looked with profound indifference. Nowhere could be found that sensitive and

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restless compassion which has in our time extended a powerful protection to the factory child, to the Hindoo widow, to the negro slave, which pries into the stores and watercasks of every emigrant ship, which winces at every lash laid on the back of a drunken soldier, which will not suffer the thief in the hulks to be ill-fed or over-worked, and which has repeatedly endeavoured to save the life even of the murderer."

It is a shocking picture of human depravity, and almost passes belief when we recall the fact that seventeen centuries of Christianity had passed, that the representatives of that church had wielded almost absolute power for hundreds of years during that period; when we remember that literature and science and the arts had made astonishing progress, while the country was increasing in wealth under the influence of growing manufactures and a world-wide commerce. Yet this horrible state of things need cause little surprise; and we shall not be too hasty in condemning the people of those times if we but bear in mind the long history of humanity that stretches back behind them into the remotest antiquity. Man was from the first an individualist, a self-regarding animal. It was a character he shared with every living organism. He was no more to be blamed for its effects than fire can be blamed for burning or water for drowning. The effect of this instinct of self-regard necessarily depended on the circumstances in which it operated. In solitude, however self-regarding the

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man might be, his instinct could have no injurious influence on others of his kind. In purely rural districts, it might compel a people to toil, it might restrict them to the barest living, it might on occasion deprive them of life itself; but in the long run, hard as its influence might be, its ill work was strictly limited. Its very nature prevented its exceeding those bounds beyond which it would have destroyed or have driven to revolt the people on which its gratification depended. The mental power of the human race was however steadily increasing, and in time man invented new conditions of industry, and new methods of life in towns. The native individualism found itself at work in a new environment; and the result was what we have seen. It is difficult to believe that men could have lived and acted as they did without knowing and feeling that they were acting contrary to the dictates of morality. The master lolled in idle luxury while the child slave toiled in his mines or factories. The merchant went in state regularly to church and listened to the words of the preacher with a feeling of pious satisfaction, while away on the sea his sailors lived the life of dogs, or on his distant plantations the hopeless slave writhed under the lash. Our first impulse is to cry "hypocrisy and cant!" We shall however fail to understand humanity and its problems unless we put this impulse aside, until we recognise that present man is but the fruit of the tree whose roots lie buried in the impenetrable past. Failure to recognise

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this fact leads too easily to the assumption that those who disagree with us are playing the hypocrite and speaking or acting against their conviction ; and in this lies the origin of most of the acrimony that has ever marked human disputes where conduct, morals and beliefs are involved.

The system of government of any age is but the organised control of the influential class or classes in the community. Where there is but one centre of influence, whether that influence is the result of long tradition or whether it is maintained by force, the government is a despotic monarchy. In other times, where a class of subordinate chiefs has grown up, and submission to the leader is no longer forced upon them by the military necessities of their position, this class, the members of which wield great influence in their own localities, soon claims a share in the government of the whole country. In early stages of human progress, where the monarch possesses no independent force as a standing army, the government tends to an aristocratical form, and the political history of the country is mainly concerned with struggles and disputes between the monarch, tenacious of his old authority, and the aristocracy, seeking to confirm and strengthen their own position in the government of the country. This represents the general condition of the English government for several centuries after the conquest. The rise of the commercial middle class brought an element of complexity

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into the political system. They sought to introduce such changes into the laws and practice of the government as would further their own interests; and, animated by this simple motive, unrestrained by any moral principles, they extended their support to either of the other political forces as seemed most expedient. The political struggles subsequent to the appearance of this capitalist class were mainly confined to this class and the old aristocracy. The monarch, important as he was as an instrument to either combatant, ceased to play a foremost part. The aristocracy stood mainly on the defensive. They desired no more than to retain their old supremacy; and as that supremacy had been practically complete there was in the nature of things nothing more for them to struggle for. The capitalist class on the other hand was engaged in an essentially aggressive movement. From being without a voice in the affairs of State, they sought to acquire such an influence as would enable them to control the government in those industrial matters in which their interests were specially bound up. Neither party found any obstacle in the shape of definite moral principles; and both parties accordingly felt no reluctance to use such means as circumstances placed within their reach. As a consequence, although the old or landed aristocracy and the new capitalist class formed distinct camps or political parties, with more or less well defined borders, yet the necessities of their situation, acting as each must in the legis-

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lature through individuals, gave rise to a state of political corruption without a parallel in Europe in recent centuries. External pressure tended to weld each into a class, recognising and promoting in the main its class interests ; but, as the self-regard of the individual was the force which for the most part bound these classes together, it was easy enough for one side to seduce members of the other by offering advantages which should outweigh the rewards of loyalty to party. The temptation to which the aristocrat most easily succumbed was wealth, his ever growing secondary wants and consequent extravagance leading to a financial stress which gold alone could relieve. On the other hand, the commercial class desired, what the other side alone could give, admission to the ranks of, and recognition by, the old aristocracy whom the mercantile classes in common with the rest of the people had from time immemorial regarded as their natural superiors. These two commodities, gold and titles, were always on sale in the political market ; nor was there in that age, when social morality was so low, any shame in that unsavoury traffic. The lower or working classes had no voice in the governing of the country ; nor is there any reason to suppose that they would have shown any greater regard for the general good than did the others.

If the government of the country was carried on in this frankly unscrupulous way, without regard for the well-being of those who had no

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voice in its proceedings, and who, from lack of any power of continuous common action, had no effective means of influencing it from outside, we may reasonably expect that the administration of justice was in a like deplorable condition. The laws of the country in any individualistic society or any community where the instinct of self-regard is the main active principle represent merely those rules of conduct which the governing classes consider to be necessary to maintain things as they are. Nor will the governing classes in such a community, of their own free will, introduce new laws which shall diminish their own power and share it with a class that has hitherto been subject only. Broadly speaking, the laws will merely confirm and enforce the relations between members of the community which long habit has already elevated into custom. Where new conditions arise, which the existing laws do not meet, the legislation in such an individualistic community must inevitably tend to secure to the governing classes all the advantages which such new conditions bring with them. Moreover, where the governing power passes into the hands of a new body, as by revolution or successful invasion, the existing laws securing rights and privileges to the new subject classes may be left nominally untouched, but must inevitably tend to fall into decay and disuse.

In its broad outlines this represents the history of "justice" in England from the Norman

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Conquest till the end of the eighteenth century, before anything in the shape of a Public Conscience had come into existence. The laws of Edward the Confessor were nominally maintained ; but such liberties as those laws secured to the people quickly disappeared under the unrestrained tyranny of the conquerors. New legislation was almost entirely of a repressive character. The position of the invaders, won by the sword, was confirmed by a series of enactments of the most cruel and barbarous character. Forest laws of the harshest kind were introduced for the protection of the sport of the new masters of the country ; and the rights and liberties of the common people, which had previously been secured by law, now rested in effect upon the will of the king and his nobles. Not until king and barons quarrelled, and were mutually driven to seek support from the people, did the latter secure any improvement in their legislative position. The Great Charter which the barons, backed by popular support, extorted from King John won for the people as the price of their support the first real instalment of justice or judicial liberty since William planted his standard in the country.

The spoils of Revolution, however, fall into the hands of those who control the machine of government after the period of Revolution has passed. The lower class retained no voice in the legislature after the revolution which secured that charter ; and accordingly the rights of which they

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then secured recognition, found little practical admission. They lay buried in parchment, useful only as a precedent to which in future times the people could appeal.

The rise, however, of a capitalist middle class left a more permanent impression on the laws and practice of the country. The rights and privileges they won through the power of the purse, they maintained by the voice they secured in the legislature. Just as the Normans were chiefly interested in maintaining the rights and privileges of land, so the new middle class was mainly concerned with securing the freedom and opportunities of capital; and not only did the written law represent their demands, but the administration of the law, being in the hands of their nominees, of members of their own class, tended to deepen the influence of property upon the whole of our judicial system. Offences against property are to-day more severely punished on the whole than offences against the person, and the above brief history furnishes ample reason for this state of things.

The written law is, if anything, inferior in importance to the spirit of its administration. And it accordingly happens that, although in the course of history a liberal and benign code of laws is from time to time promulgated under the pressure of revolution, yet the defective and illiberal spirit of its administration leaves the people with the husk only, a banner of liberty waving over the man in chains. The administration of the

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law will in the long run be pure only so far as the great body of the people demand that it shall be pure. It depends upon what may be called the Public Conscience, an active moral sense in the people. Without that the actual operation of the law must be coloured by the personal interests of those who administer it. It can hardly be otherwise in an individualistic society. The active operation of the law affects not the class, but individuals; and in a community where the self-regarding instinct is supreme, in which the sense of justice, the moral instinct, has little force, the injuries which one person may suffer by violation of the law, by a dishonest and corrupt judge, provoke no sympathy in the minds of his fellows unless the circumstances suggest that a like injury is impending in their own case. It is only when a genuine moral sense has developed in the people that prostitution of the law to private interests provokes general indignation. When a people has reached that stage of progress the corrupt administration of the law will cease; and, generally speaking, the purity of the judicial bench will reflect the general moral condition of the people.

At what point then in this process of evolution does the moral sense appear, and what are its limits at any particular time?

At the low stage of human mental development at which the power of imagination and abstraction has not appeared, there is no such thing as

“justice,” as “right” or “wrong.” These terms themselves imply a comparison between specific acts and some ideal course of conduct. It would not even be correct to say of such an immature state that might is right. The human being at such a period takes his existing circumstances as in the natural order of things, to be altered if he has desires which such circumstances do not gratify, but not to be rebelled against because in themselves they are imperfect. As has been pointed out, the circumstances that slowly forced man to become a social animal forced upon him such a modification in his habits as made social existence possible. The innate tendency of man, as of every living organism, is to repeat the past impressions or experiences of the race; and the habit of mutual toleration, which in its slow growth had made society possible, became ‘an instinct, and, in these early stages, the only bond which held the society together. The early social man, if he withheld his hand from his neighbour, did so, not from any perception of its propriety, not from any sense that he ought so to act, but refrained merely in accordance with this instinct. When intelligence had made some progress, failure in any individual to act in accordance with this hereditary habit brought upon him the censure of the community. Thus in these early times there grew up a Public Opinion—antecedent to any recognised law—which approved the maintenance of the existing state of things, and discountenanced any attempt at change. “Thou

shalt not attack another member of the tribe without provocation," was doubtless the first and most important of these habits, and the first unwritten rule that Public Opinion approved. "Thou shalt destroy the stranger" might well have been the second. As the society progressed in numbers and wealth and slowly became organised in classes, the ingrained habits which became part of the character of the people as these changes took place became more complex with the growing complexity of their social relations. A complex organism is subject to more diverse variations than a simple one; and so in the more complex society the instincts of the individuals, though similar in the main, differed slightly in minor points. As their instincts ceased to be uniform, so instinct itself ceased to be a sufficient guide to conduct; and it became necessary to lay down certain rules defining the conduct of the individual in the more important social relations. Laws, as such, made their appearance.

In an early society where, as must generally have been the case, the mature males had an equal voice in determining the laws of the community, those laws, which merely defined existing habit, coincided with the general instincts of the people; and Public Opinion agreed with the declared law. The laws, which merely defined pre-existing customs, served to perpetuate and to regulate them, and so to establish a public opinion—or, if we may use the term, a code of public

morality—generally felt by the whole community. The general sense of the society also approved and applauded other branches of conduct to which the written laws did not extend. This referred especially to the relations of the community with other communities; and as in the early and purely self-regarding phase of human evolution foreign relations were actively or passively hostile, public opinion — or public morality—approved of acts detrimental to such other communities. The glories of the scalp-hunter illustrate this in simple societies. The popular acclamation awarded to the patriotic buccaneer in the Middle Ages brings it nearer home. While the ready approval, even the enthusiastic applause, that rewards the modern statesman with a “spirited foreign policy” shows the traces of that characteristic feature of the Public Opinion of earlier times.

In course of time, the primitive community, from being an independent society, becomes subject to irresponsible despotism. A new code of laws representing, not the customs of the people, but the wishes of the tyrant is forced upon them. The new laws to the extent to which they conflict with the ingrained habits of the people cease to represent Public Opinion; while Public Opinion itself, having no longer any means of expression, tends to decay like any other function that suffers from disuse. In a primitive people, whose minds have but little developed, such a change, by destroying the present habits of the

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people and imposing on them fresh ones, ends in time by replacing their original instincts with instincts founded on these new habits. Within historic times foreign domination has never destroyed the great body of customary relations between the individuals of the conquered society ; and, except in isolated cases, has not greatly disturbed the individual morality of the people. It has, however, almost always radically altered the relations of the great body of the people to the government ; and in doing so has seriously weakened, if not destroyed, that common expression of public morality which we call Public Opinion.

This was in all essentials the result of the Norman Conquest ; and from that time till towards the close of the present period public opinion as an influence on public affairs was nonexistent. How it was once more built up again we shall see later ; but during these centuries the public voice was dead, and the Government in its various functions was left almost untrammelled so far as the lower classes were concerned, the only check on its action being the possibility that widespread discontent might afford a ready instrument to some aspiring person or section in the ruling classes. Little wonder then that the judicial bench was corrupt ; and that, in the common phrase, there was one law for the rich and one for the poor.

As to the international relations of this period little need be said. With the nobles, who were

of Continental extraction and in many ways connected with the countries across the Channel, there existed little of that blind hatred of the foreigner typical of most early societies. They experienced merely feelings of enmity, born of their frequent wars and rival ambitions. Among the mercantile classes, constant communication and association with foreign peoples had worn away the edge of that old instinctive hate; but among the lower orders there had been little to diminish the innate hostility of one society towards another. To them the foreigner was beyond the pale of law. He was hated as a natural enemy. This feeling, handed down from the earliest ages of human existence as one of the animal's most primitive instincts, had never been subject to the softening influences of mutual intercourse or peaceful association. It was to the interests of the ruling classes to cultivate and encourage this blind hostility; and under the guise of an appeal to patriotism they rarely failed to find a ready popular support for the foreign enterprises which lust of power or greed for gold suggested.

CHAPTER XII

EVOLUTION OF MORALITY AND RELIGION

WITH such a melancholy picture before us, we might be tempted to ask whether such a thing as morality existed in England during the period now under review, and whether the social instinct had been entirely crushed by this flood of individualism which appeared to direct every phase of the national life. It may be desirable here to sketch briefly the origin and growth of what is called the moral sense, and to learn if possible from that history what stage it had reached and what influence it was able to exert prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century. We shall find that it had made very substantial progress; and that it had acquired a sufficient hold over the general character of the people to account for the considerable advance in their manners and mutual relations which the nineteenth century discloses. At the risk of some repetition it will be best to trace this most important feature of human nature from its first inception.

In the earliest stages of man's existence, before he had emerged from the purely-animal state, his sole concern was self-maintenance, including in

that term the protection of his offspring during their early years. This instinct of self-regard directed all his actions. He sought those things necessary to his own existence and avoided those which experience had shown to be inimical to him. His relations with his fellows were purely negative.

In course of time circumstances had accustomed him to the neighbourhood of others, and he became a social animal. A corresponding change took place in his habits. His previous habits were modified, but only to the extent which made such social existence possible. Whereas in his earlier state his instinct was to shun or attack his fellows as possible dangers to himself, that instinct had been modified under the influence of long habit, and he now instinctively tolerated the neighbourhood of members of his own society, and ceased to experience that feeling of aversion which in anti-social times their proximity would have provoked. He refrained from injuring them (under normal circumstances), not from any sense that he ought not to injure his fellow tribesmen, but solely from the unreasoning, unconscious instinct that circumstances had engendered in him. The primitive society could not exist if its members attacked each other without cause ; but it could exist although no member aided another in any way, although each pursued his own desires subject to this special exception. The idea of morality, the consciousness of right and wrong, was altogether beyond the limited mental faculties

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of these people ; yet their mutual relations were marked by this species of restraint, and to that extent their conduct conformed to a simple moral code summed up in the words "Thou shalt do no murder." It was essential to the existence of the society that any member whose instinct fell short of the general standard, and who attacked another without cause, should be expelled. He ceased to be a member of the society, and was probably slain as they would have slain any other individual who was not of their own community. This action of the society in punishing the offence served to strengthen the instinct not to murder a fellow citizen by making the habit of self-restraint more uniform, and by destroying those members who might have handed down their non-social habits to other generations. The man had acquired a moral instinct of this limited character ; but his morality—or habitual conformity to certain rules of conduct—did not extend beyond this simple social necessity of mutual forbearance.

Time passed, and man's mental powers progressed. He became a tool-using animal, and acquired property or the exclusive use of the tools he had made. Concurrently with this advance there grew up the habit of leaving each member of the society in undisputed possession of his property. To his instinct "not to murder" man had added another "not to steal." While in view of the fact that unrestrained theft by provoking continual disputes would quickly have destroyed the society, the community punished or permitted

the punishment of the thief, and so helped to confirm this new instinct. Normal man, so far as regards his own community, had ceased to be a murdering or a stealing animal. His moral character had become a little more complex ; but his moral instincts were no more than the aggregate of the habits which the necessities of social existence had forced upon him. He, however, had no instinct to spare his enemy or to treat his wife, children and animals with kindness. His conduct in those matters did not threaten the existence of the community, and did not come within the sphere of those rules of conduct on which the community insisted. As we often hear to-day, the man was free to do as he liked with his own. His conduct was in no sense immoral, since it violated no instinct, and conflicted with no standard of morality recognised by any member of the community.

As the moral sense becomes more complex, it becomes like any other function more liable to variation. Its character in different individuals grows less uniform. The instinct "not to steal" will for that reason find more exceptions than the instinct "not to murder"; and it becomes more necessary for the community to lay down a definite prohibition against theft. Moreover in the case of property the instinct not to injure the person by stealing his goods has always opposed to it the self-regarding desire for the articles themselves; and this conflict between the prompting of primitive individualism and the

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restraining influence of the acquired habit tends to increase the number of individuals in whom the secondary instinct "not to steal" is too weak to control their conduct on all occasions. It becomes the more necessary for the community to strengthen the instinct not to steal by fixing and regularly inflicting a punishment for theft, and so bringing to its support the individualistic instinct to avoid pain. A code of laws, written or oral, becomes an inevitable necessity before the society has made any marked progress; the laws merely expressing or reflecting the normal moral instinct of the community.

Let us now take a step forward. The society has made substantial progress. Man's mental powers are more marked. He has acquired some power of reason and imagination. The habits or customs that have grown up during this period are more complicated than before. A new and important factor appears in the shape of religion, the primitive superstition that sees in all natural phenomena the action of spirits or invisible powers. As already pointed out in an earlier chapter, this belief is one of the first consequences of the development of the faculty of reason; while its constant presentation to the mind in the effects of natural forces, or in the religious ceremonies that soon grow up, make it in time one of the most deeply rooted instincts in the human mind.

At first the spirit was merely a dangerous power that must be placated, or whose favour and assistance must be secured. Numerous rites were

invented with this object ; and as the favour of the spirit was essential to the existence of the society, the performance of those rites became, not only a habit which the self-regarding instincts of the individual might have produced, but a custom which the law enforced. The power of the spirit made his enmity more dangerous to the community than did murder and theft in the case of individuals ; and the punishment the law inflicted on all violation of those rites became proportionately severe. The interests both of the individual and the society coincided in this ; and accordingly belief in and worship of the unseen powers took their place among the moral instincts of the people.

The powers of reason and imagination which man had acquired, low as they were, enabled him to regard as a duty that course of conduct departure from which involved punishment. The idea of right and wrong dimly presented itself to his mind ; and he recognised as "right" that conduct which the normal moral instincts of the community, as expressed in the law, enjoined. Morality was still but another word for the habits which the exigences of social existence had brought about. It was possible for the man to act in accordance with these, his only, moral instincts, to refrain from murdering or robbing his fellow, to perform with exactness all his religious duties, and yet to be capable of the most atrocious cruelty in other matters. This conduct, which

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seems to us to violate the laws of morality, was regarded without concern by those primitive peoples. Innumerable evidences of this can be found in the records of primitive societies ; and there is hardly a traveller who does not dwell with horror and disgust on the cruel and barbarous practices to which such communities as a whole seemed quite indifferent, while yet the above simple laws were rigorously enforced.

The moral instinct in these early times did not extend beyond those customary or habitual restraints which the necessities of social existence demanded, and which were further impressed upon the character of the people through the laws. This left room, as we may well understand, for many actions which we should by reference to some ideal standard condemn as immoral. But the curious anomalies that resulted from the identity of morals and habits in men of low mental development is not confined to primitive races. We may find a thousand instances of the same fact in our common life to-day. The grocer who makes a fortune by weighing his tea in heavy paper or by watering his butter, the multiple shopkeeper who by manipulating prices succeeds in ruining his small competitor, the financier who by ingenious advertising floats a company for many times its real value, the landowner who uses the necessities of his tenants as a means of increasing his rents, the statesman who by diplomacy or force appropriates some foreign territory, the enterprising trader who obtains by

dubious means concessions from native chiefs, all serve to illustrate this. They all conform to the laws of their country with scrupulous rigour. They manifest a patriotism, and frequently display a full-handed charity. Their business methods and their private habits exhibit a singular contrast to which attention has often been directed of late years; and yet in the majority of these cases they are not conscious, or but very dimly conscious, of having violated any moral law, or acted contrary to the dictates of any moral instinct. The experience of our savage ancestors affords an explanation of this otherwise incomprehensible fact.

Let us return to our primitive society. As it progressed in numbers and organisation, the general equality of the males disappeared, and a more or less qualified despotism took its place either in the course of its own internal development or by foreign conquest. There was in the former case a concurrent, and in the latter a consequent, habit of submission which it became the inevitable object of the laws to enforce. The primitive moral instincts were modified by this new habit. With the subject man it was still "thou shalt not kill"; but in the case of the despot, who had probably won and maintained his position by the sword, the same rule did not apply. This condition has at times been the lot of all races; and in all the moral instinct has been so modified that although murder by a common man has roused a feeling of abhorrence

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in the people, the slaughter of a commoner by the king or by the chiefs has provoked no such feeling. The same thing happened in the case of theft. Even in recent times instances of this can be found. The man who stole a goose was regarded as a reprobate. The moral instinct rose in arms against him. But the noble enclosed the common without provoking anything beyond a mild feeling of rebuke in the commoners, and nothing but approval among his fellows. Here again in minds of low development the moral instinct is identical with ingrained habit.

The change in the secular laws of our early society under the influence of class or personal domination finds a counterpart in the injunctions of religion. Submission to the king and submission to the priest became the main inspiration of the law both secular and religious. The king required obedience to his will and a due attention to the religious rites. The priest demanded the fullest performance of religious duties including submission to himself, and obedience to the king. Submission to these powers was added in course of time to the number of man's moral instincts.

So far, the moral instincts appear to be confined to those habits which long use had impressed upon the character of the people, and which were strengthened and perpetuated by the law. One important change has, however, occurred. The earlier moral instincts were solely restraints upon the individual, impelling him to refrain from doing this or that to the injury of

his fellow. To that purely negative character was now added the positive injunction to do this or that for the benefit of the dominant authority. This new feature must have done much to inculcate a sense of duty which mere passive restraint could never have imparted. This duty was, however, merely from the subject to the ruler. There was nothing in the law of this early society to suggest or require active duty towards a fellow subject. Nor could it well be otherwise. The laws were promulgated by priest or king. Both these were creatures of past conditions, like the rest of the people; although, unlike the latter, they had been less subject to the modifying influence of submission to authority. If the people were mainly self-regarding in their general character, the lawgivers must have been, if anything, more so. The laws were naturally directed to the preservation of those who devised and enforced them; and that end was met by compelling the *passive* habit of mutual restraint among the people, and the *active* performance of duties to priest and king. The priest no more than the king did anything to extend the range of the moral habits of the people beyond these limits.

At this period religion did nothing to improve the moral condition of the people. The spirits or gods that formed the object of their superstition were merely unseen powers with passions and feelings similar to their own. At a time before the mind of the average man had acquired

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any power of abstraction or idealism it was impossible that the human being should ascribe to these other powers qualities which had not come within his experience. The gods were beings to be feared ; and the religious rites consisted in offering to the gods such things as might soothe their wrath and purchase their aid. This was the general character of all primitive religions ; and the only effect of their observances was to confirm the man in his already acquired habits.

Even at a much later date the purely reflective character of its injunctions, negative as regards the mutual relations of the people, positive in their relations to authority, is the common feature of the religion of all races. No better illustration need be sought than the Ten Commandments of the Hebrews. Though those people had reached a considerable stage of advance during their long association with Egypt, yet the central laws of their theocracy are silent upon the possible active duties of citizens towards each other.

Meanwhile, although religion did nothing to promote the moral advance of the people, other factors were at work. Of these, one was the constant intercourse between the people, and the other the advance in the mental powers of the race, culminating in a class of philosophers and speculative thinkers. Of these two influences tending to change the moral character of the race, the first, arising from the great body of the people, was infinitely the more important. The second, born of a section of the ruling classes,

had relatively little effect beyond their own immediate circle.

Habitual intercourse had long since changed the man-animal into a social being, and had effected considerable changes in his character. He had acquired certain negative relations towards his fellows ; and these negative relations, without which social existence would have been impossible, formed the substratum of the social instinct. But continual intercourse with his fellows was effecting other changes in his character. In other words, changing environment or conditions of existence had its due effect upon the organism in modifying its functions. Pain is often said to be the high road to improvement. If by pain we mean incomplete adjustment of function to environment it is doubtless true that pain is the prime source of change, if not necessarily of improvement. In the case of man his political subjection served this purpose. It increased the number of restraints to which he was subjected. It restricted his opportunities of gratifying those self-regarding desires which had been the main source of his pleasure in earlier days. The more orderly society and its advance in the industrial arts led to an increasing population. This in its turn, by forcing upon the individual closer and more frequent communion with his fellows, aided the change in his character. From merely tolerating the presence of others of his kind, he began to find their presence necessary to his comfort. Solitude became in time an almost intolerable

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condition, to be ended by the earliest possible return to the society of his fellows. Another element in the social instinct had appeared ; and this change in his character, with all the consequences that flowed from it, he owed mainly to the loss of his political liberty without which in these early stages the complex organisation of society and the improvement in the arts and sciences could hardly have taken place.

This additional characteristic in the man, this active attraction towards and interest in his fellows, was at first confined to the dwellers in the towns, and to the most dependent of them. Such circumstances would appear to be necessary to effect this change in his habits. Where in a dense population, under conditions in which the man's ambition (or exercise of free self-regarding powers) had no scope, his life must have been intimately affected by the individuals around him. Cheerful and contented neighbours would have afforded him greater pleasure than unhappy or unfortunate ones. The good or ill fortune of his fellows thus had a direct effect upon himself ; and in consequence he must have come to desire the good of the other as a condition of his own happiness. These conditions would be filled most completely in a settled society, such as the capital of a powerful empire, where a considerable proportion of the people were in a state of slavery. Among these slaves, free from the individualistic atmosphere of a competitive society, having little or no occasion to exercise their self-regarding or

anti-social instincts for a livelihood, hopeless as far as any improvement in their position was concerned—a position which afforded no opportunity for the exercise of ambition—this habit of interest in the welfare of others in a like position seems an almost inevitable outcome of their circumstances. Among a politically free people, however poor, who had opportunity to struggle for better things, the same impulse to fellowship would not have arisen, at least in anything like the same degree. This power of affection, of mutual sympathy, leading to some active attempt to promote the well-being of others, arises primarily among the poorest and most hopeless of mankind. It is an interesting stage in the evolution of human nature ; and the fact finds many illustrations in later days, and will be in the experience of most of those to-day who are at all acquainted with the life and habits of some of the poorer sections of this country. It is indeed often remarked that “the poor help the poor” ; and we may now recognise one reason at least why it should be so.

At the other end of the social scale there appeared as time advanced, a leisured class, most of whom were given up to luxury and sloth ; but of whom some found their chief pleasure in mental exercises. From the writers and thinkers who arose in this class there came in due course not only poetry and the lighter forms of literature, but philosophies and speculations in the region of mind and scientific discoveries in the

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region of fact. All these philosophies dealt with the problem of human existence ; and some recognised, what the lowest of their fellows were learning in their own persons, that human love might be a more powerful factor in human happiness than human hate. Both these classes, however, the slave who discovered the fact of human sympathy and the philosopher who discovered the theory, were severed from the main body of the people—king, priests, nobles, and commoners—and their practices or opinions had little opportunity of impressing the general character of the people.

The religion of the people was, however, subject to change as the mode of life of the people changed. In the earlier tribal days war and bloodshed had been the daily experience, and the martial and cruel character of the people was reflected in the character of their deities. This would seem a natural consequence of the human origin of religious ideas. The unseen powers were in the mind of the primitive savage beings with like feelings and passions as his own, and the pleasure he himself found in the outpouring of blood and the gratification which the slaughter of his enemies afforded gave to his deities and to his religious rites a like barbarous character. The conditions of human existence and consequently of the habits and traditions of the people changed considerably as tribes rose into nations, and these into empires. The capital of a great empire was remote from the actual field of war, while it was at the same time

the centre to which the spoils of war continuously flowed. The people became less warlike; while their abundant prosperity accustomed them to pleasures of an easier and more diverse kind. The character of the deities followed suit. They were no longer dread spirits delighting in blood and torture; but as the thoughts and habits of the people flowed into less martial but more varied channels the unseen world became peopled with a crowd of minor deities, also devoted to, or presiding over, these new fields of human habit. This change in the character of the gods was greatly assisted by the poets of the age, who devoted a luxurious fancy to the objects of religious worship, and gave to the vague images in the popular mind a beauty of form and a charm of colour they could not otherwise have attained.

The character of the deities was still a reflection of the character of the man. Man was still mainly a self-regarding animal to whom the ideas of love, sympathy, self-sacrifice, were either foreign, or despised as being unworthy a proud, imperial race. A god of war, a god of pleasure, they could understand and appreciate; but a god of love was beyond their comprehension, and would have provoked but scorn and derision. Moreover the religious beliefs and ceremonies which those in authority enforced, whether at the instigation of their own characters or policy, served to strengthen this popular view of the gods. It was to the interest of the rulers of the people to maintain the

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old form of belief and the ancient rites, and to discourage change. In change was always the possibility of danger; but the old forms had become identified with their own rule, and served as a powerful bulwark in its support. It was further in their interest to maintain the popular view of the gods as beings to be feared, as spirits whose wrath could only be withheld from the people by the influence of the priest or king. The submission of the people could be relied on while that belief maintained its influence. Moreover it had become the custom for kings and priests—partly from vanity and partly as a means of impressing the popular imagination—to surround themselves with elaborate and gorgeous ceremonies, and to hold themselves aloof from approach by the ordinary man. The worship of the national gods, in the same way and for the same reason, became marked by an ever increasing splendour, an ever growing ceremonial and ritual. All these things tended to maintain the old conception of the gods while the popular habits and modes of thought were slowly changing. It is therefore not surprising that the religion of those times did nothing to promote, but everything to check, the moral advance of the people. Nor need we wonder why the fancies of the poets, illustrating and illuminating the feelings common among the people, had a real effect upon the popular religion; while the speculations of the philosophers, extending as some did into the loftiest regions of morality, passed like the idle

wind across the city and left the character both of people and gods unaffected.

A brief reference to the chief religions of the Ancient World will serve to illustrate these facts. The accounts that we have of these old religions refer to periods when society had reached an advanced stage; and they serve to show the permanence of the old individualist conception of the gods, corresponding closely with the habits of the people, and the various moral rules that had in time, under the influence of the philosophers, become more or less connected with the general religious system, but which had, in spite of that, exercised little influence upon the great body of the common people. The following is a brief summary of the conclusions in Professor Rawlinson's work on Religions of the Ancient World.

The religion of the Egyptians was polytheistic, embracing some hundreds of gods and goddesses, who each discharged a more or less peculiar function. With them "almost any fact of nature, almost any act of man, might be taken separately and personified, the personification becoming thenceforth a god or goddess." Animal worship formed a special part of their system, and we are told that "each town was jealous for the honour of its special favourites, and quarrels broke out between city and city, or between province and province in connection with their sacred animals, which led in some cases to violent and prolonged conflicts, in others to smouldering but permanent hostility." The religious ceremonial was

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magnificent and splendid, and filled a large place in the life of the people. The philosophic additions to the earlier popular religion were vague, but generally it was held that the *ultimate* end of the bad was annihilation, and of the good absorption in the divine essence. Man's fate after death pending the ultimate end, depended on observance of the moral law and performance of his various duties. The more educated during the later stages of the Egyptian religion believed in one Supreme God of whom the popular gods represented the various qualities.

The Assyrians were polytheistic ; but there is little certainty as to the details of the religious philosophy.

The religious philosophy of the Iranians showed considerable advance. It recognised two original uncreated principles, Good and Evil. The former rewarded the good and punished the bad, but in the popular mind he was seldom contemplated in this aspect. It laid down the duties of man to be piety (which became synonymous with observance of religious rites), purity, industry and veracity. It professed belief in a future life. It imposed on its followers a burdensome yoke of ceremonial observances, and inclined to identify goodness with orthodoxy, and wickedness with a rejection of the doctrines of Zoroaster. Magism (worship of the elements) became fused with this. It was mainly marked by its ceremonial magnificence, and the pride and pretensions of its priest caste.

The early Sanskrit Indians professed a pure polytheism, beginning with natural objects and passing into persons. Future life was hardly conceived by the people. Prayers were generally for purely temporal benefits, and the sense of guilt was slight.

The Phoenicians also were polytheistic. They practised a low and debased form of belief and worship; some of their religious rites being marked by extreme licentiousness.

The Etruscans, of whose morals there are very unfavourable accounts, "excelled in the arts of religious observances." Religion pervaded the life of the people. The priests were not teachers of morality, but merely soothsayers; and the gods were beings to be dreaded and propitiated rather than loved and worshipped.

The Greeks likewise were polytheistic, passing from natural objects to persons. The gods were of an indifferent morality. "The modern moralist will regret this unworthy representation of divine beings; but it is quite in accord with the general character of the Greek religion which reflected back upon deity all that was weak as well as all that was strong in man." The Greek religion was in the main of a joyous, pleasant, lightsome kind. The Greek was devoid of any deep sense of sin, while his religion was marked by many rites and festivals.

The general conclusion of this work is that ancient religions consisted almost entirely of beliefs, rites and ceremonies, and had but little

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reference to the general conduct of individuals, the connection being, little as it was, accidental than otherwise.

These accounts of ancient religions in their most powerful periods agree with the general character of the early individualistic religion above referred to, and show how little, if any, influence they could have exercised in promoting the moral progress of the people.

The period of the ancient religions culminated under the Roman Empire; and the various features of the moral and religious aspects of old societies stand out at this period with the most striking prominence. In Rome itself and in the great cities of the Empire, there were three distinct classes of religious thought and feeling, the educated classes, the general body of Roman citizens, and the great slave population. Among the educated classes philosophic speculation had proceeded to great lengths, and had wandered into many strange paths. The crude beliefs of the vulgar had faded away under the influence of the daring speculations in which the educated mind delighted. In some, as with the Epicureans, the old superstition had given place to atheism; while with others, as the Stoics, the coarse, material conceptions of the popular religion had been refined away and left but the essence of a pure theism. It was among these educated classes alone that there existed any defined moral code outside the injunctions of the ordinary law. Stoicism, for example, was marked by "an austere

sanctity," and its system of ethics "carried self-sacrifice to a point that has rarely been equalled, although the belief in the immortality of the soul was resolutely excluded from their motives of action." They taught in the most emphatic language the fraternity of all men and the duty of self-sacrifice; and they held up the practice of virtue as the loftiest object of human endeavour. They urged that man became acceptable to the Deity by his own virtue; and that all sacrifices, rites and forms were indifferent. Yet, lofty as were their ideals, and complete, to the point of death, as was their devotion to them, they failed to exercise any influence upon the great body of the people. They lived upon a different plane to the mass of the citizens, and neither their precepts nor their practices affected the lives or touched the imagination of the vulgar.

The great body of the free citizens in Rome were too much occupied with their purely selfish pursuits to feel the need, or to be open to the influence, of any unselfish moral code. Living in the capital of the known world through which passed an overflowing stream of the spoils of war or the tribute of subject peoples, their imaginations stirred by the countless processions and ceremonies that marked the age, and their animal instincts inflamed by the bloodthirsty spectacle of the gladiatorial shows, there was little opportunity for the gentler emotions of peace and goodwill to reach them. They were profoundly ignorant; and the only impressions that reached their minds

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came from the varying incidents of their daily lives. Belief in the existence of supernatural powers was still undisturbed, an instinct handed down from the remotest past which neither reflection nor teaching had yet come to shake. The actual gods of the old Roman State were, however, becoming objects of comparative indifference ; and the active exercise of religion consisted only in perfunctory attendance at the various rites and ceremonies of the State Church. As the vitality of the religion decayed, the brilliance and splendour of its ritual increased ; but no more than before did it serve in the least degree as an instrument for ameliorating the moral condition of the people. Among the free section of the people the social instinct was almost entirely restricted to its passive or negative side ; *i.e.* they had received from their ancestors those primitive social habits to refrain from murder, theft and the like, but they had acquired little or nothing of the active qualities of sympathy, mutual aid, and self-sacrifice.

Below these, forming the great foundation on which Roman society was built, lay a great body of slaves. Among sections of these there existed some degree of sympathy and goodwill, a craving for fellowship, a disposition to acts of mutual kindness, which cannot be traced in any other section of Roman society. They, too, were unlearned like the rest of the common people, and, like them, retained an undisturbed belief in the supernatural powers. That there were gods

was still a truism ; but the recognised gods of Rome no longer satisfied them. Their very human and often lascivious characters, marked chiefly by a devotion to pleasures, unrelieved by any appearance of sympathy with human suffering, no longer responded to the feelings and needs of these people. The personal reality of the Roman gods began to fade away ; and there grew up a desire for a system more in accord with the softer sentiments that had found their way into human experience.

It was at such a time that Christianity made its appearance.

The new religion was not the first with which a lofty moral philosophy had been associated ; nor was its moral teaching essentially different from the moral conceptions that had already found expression in the world. But it differed from its predecessors in that its moral side formed, not a mere philosophic addition to its theological beliefs, but their very core. Its moral impulse, too, arose from among the people, and so reached those whom the older philosophies had not touched. Its moral teachings, moreover, pulsated with the warmth of sympathy and self-sacrifice which began to fill a large part in the lives of many of the most hopeless class ; while they avoided the frigid purity, the chill self-restraint, which were the special characteristics of the Stoic system, and which, though winning the approval and admiration of the intellect, left the emotions cold and unresponsive. Not only did the new

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religion give expression and a definite shape to the new social wants that were arising in the people ; but it attached itself to, and so secured the powerful aid of, the unseen world of spirits. There is little cause to wonder then that the new gospel of human fellowship appealed with special force to the hopeless class of men, and particularly of women ; while it failed entirely to affect the classes above them, except to provoke their anger and contempt.

It would be foreign to the purpose of this work to dwell at any length on the history of that religion since it first secured a footing in the Roman Empire ; but in view of the supreme importance that is often attached to religion as the mainspring of moral progress, some attention must be given to its progress to the present date.

The whole history affords a striking illustration of the fact that the nature of man, with all its moral strength and weakness, is a product of evolution ; that it advances step by step, its condition at any one moment being but the repetition of its previous condition varied or modified by the circumstances of the time. While the new religion was confined to the class to which it had specially appealed, a class already subject to the influence of the gentler emotions their condition had produced, it remained a real vivifying force. It magnified in them those characteristics which they most valued ; just as among other peoples the worship of cruel and

blood-thirsty deities had strengthened in them those barbarous instincts ; and so for the first century or more the Christians were distinguished by a high state of moral purity. They were, however, surrounded by a population to whom the qualities of gentleness and unselfishness were still foreign. With these special features of early Christian teaching they had no sympathy ; but the organisation of the early church afforded opportunity for the ambitious and self-seeking, and the leaders of the Church soon began to display those old individualist qualities which marked the world at large. By the end of the second century the Church had become but a microcosm of the outside world. It still possessed in its humblest ranks many in whom the social instinct was a real force ; but it was governed by a hierarchy marked by all those individualist qualities—ambition, self-seeking, lust of power and wealth, intolerance and hate—which are sometimes regarded as having been the special prerogative of the Pagan World. There was, too, in the average Christian of the time little to distinguish his mental conception of the Deity from those of the Pagans around him. Some sects admitted Pagan rites, while in Egypt in the time of Hadrian many worshipped both Christ and Serapis ; and as time went on Christianity assumed a form that was “quite as polytheistic and quite as idolatrous as the ancient Paganism ” (Lecky). According to Renan “Seeking after the highest place was the greatest evil

which afflicted the Christian Churches. . . . By the end of the second century, everything had resolved itself into a question of canonical succession, and the living sentiment of the Churches existed no longer. . . . The Church was governed by an ecclesiastical oligarchy; and this formed its strength as the original spontaneous force declined." Lecky, too, dwells upon this revival of the old self-regarding instincts after the first century. Its motive ceased to be a question of morals, and became one of orthodoxy. The temporal interests of the Church were extended in the most unscrupulous ways. Forgery of documents was a common practice, while there existed an "absolute indifference to truth when falsehood could subserve the interests of the Church," and "the religious history of several centuries is little more than a history of the rapacity of priests and the credulity of laymen." "The habits of thought and feeling of the ancient (Pagan) faith," he says, "reappeared in new (Christian) forms and a new language . . . the old gods still retained, under a new faith, no small part of their influence over the world." Hallam offers the same evidence. "Passing from a condition of distress and persecution to the summit of prosperity, the Church degenerated as rapidly from her ancient purity, and forfeited the respect of future ages in the same proportion as she acquired the blind veneration of her own. Covetousness, especially, became almost a characteristic vice. Valentinian I. in 370 prohibited

the clergy from receiving the bequests of women ; a modification more discreditable than any general law could have been." "Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics in the faith and discipline of those ages appear to have been either introduced, or sedulously promoted, for the purposes of sordid fraud." His catalogue of the deficiencies of the hierarchy of the Church is a long one, and includes greed, political ambition, corruption, dissoluteness, immorality, simony and arrogance.

All this would be incredible if religion were a touchstone to turn the dross of human nature into gold. It is, however, simple and natural enough if we assume that the moral instinct is the slow outcome of the influence of the environment of the race, growing and changing by an evolutionary process like the organic world. The moral advance of the Western World has not been in the main the work of the Christian religion. That religion has, however, done one very valuable service to the race. In its lofty moral code it has maintained in existence an ideal of human conduct, and has in so doing afforded a powerful stimulus to that social instinct which circumstances were steadily, though slowly, creating. In spite of the deplorable character of most of its influential ministers, who, drawn from an individualist people, acted in the same self-regarding way as their fellows would have acted in like circumstances, there no doubt existed in the lowest walks in the Church, as in the lowest

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walks in the secular world, many in whom the social need of human fellowship was a reality; and in them the social instinct was kept alive and handed on to future generations. History has not concerned itself with the fate of these simple people. Their virtues are hidden in the glare which has been thrown upon the vice and debauchery, the violence and the lust, which characterised other sections of the people. Yet the stream of human virtue was steadily growing in volume, and permeating the classes that lay nearest to its borders. Its strength and influence manifested themselves in a growing dissent from the dogmas of the established church; and this movement was conducing to the moral improvement of mankind centuries before its first outburst in the Reformation. The social instinct, born of the circumstances of mankind, and drawing strength from its religious ideals, naturally expressed itself in the age of the world-wide domination of the Church in a religious revolt. In later times its great influence has been exercised in the political world, although the occasional religious revivals to-day repeat some of its older phases.

In England, the religious and political ideals had combined in the Puritan Revolt; and although on the surface of things the country had reverted to an immoral and dissolute stage, yet the growing social instinct was there. It flamed out in France in the Revolution, which for a moment stirred a very passion of feeling and covered the country with armies willing to die to the cry of

Liberty, Fraternity, Equality—only to fall back in a welter of blood to a condition more adapted to the stage to which the normal human nature had progressed.

We may gather from this that in the eighteenth century, in which the character of the English people seemed sunk to the very depths of depravity, there was a real body of moral feeling in the country, which all the degradation of the time could not destroy, and which, as its roots lay in the remotest past, was destined to continue and to grow when the more superficial features of the country's life had disappeared.



CHAPTER XIII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE nineteenth century was the child of the eighteenth, and the father of the future. A knowledge of the inner nature of its problems, many and complex as they are, is necessary if we are to form any conception of the direction in which humanity is moving, and of the forces which are at work modifying from day to day both the character of the man and his institutions. Those conceptions can only be of value if we recognise that the present has grown out of the past, and that the problems and difficulties which face the race to-day are the problems and difficulties which faced it in its earliest stages, changing with changing conditions, but not substantially altered in their fundamental characters.

The chief features of the human problem which may with advantage be considered separately are (1) the primary questions involving the existence of the individual—food, shelter, employment (embracing in that term the opportunities which the individual enjoys of obtaining food and shelter), (2) the secondary questions involving the existence of the society—mental advance, secondary wants, classes, government, justice, religion, the social

instinct, and international relations. There is a close and intimate relation between all these various elements in the great question of humanity. It is impossible to alter one without the change making its influence felt throughout the whole. The extent to which the primary wants of mankind are supplied must manifestly affect in the most far-reaching way the various secondary conditions of his existence, the character of his secondary wants, the relations between the classes, the form of government, the character and influence of its religion. In endeavouring to conceive a coherent picture of human conditions the mutual influence of all these factors must be borne in mind ; but, with this reservation, each of these factors may be separately examined both in its actual present condition and also in its probable future.

As regards the primary wants of food and shelter, the extraordinary advance in human knowledge, especially in its application to the arts of industry, has brought within the reach of man a greater variety and abundance of food, as it has enabled him to devise houses replete with the conveniences of life, more attractive to the eye, and more agreeable to the requirements of health. There is hardly a corner of the world which does not supply its quota to the satisfaction of the needs of modern England. An almost countless fleet of vessels pours into the country a constant stream of the produce of the outside world in return for the wealth which this country produces or has acquired. The main cause of

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this greater abundance was the introduction of machine industry. Old processes which depended on the slow and tedious labour of the man have given place to others in which those twin giants, iron and steam, have been yoked in his service. The invention and the perfection of the machine are the outstanding features of the nineteenth century; and they have resulted in an enormous increase in the efficiency, the productive power, of the individual. It might indeed be truly said that they have made many blades of grass to grow where one grew; and have brought within the reach of mankind the means of satisfying his primary wants with an ease and with an abundance that the eighteenth century could not have conceived. This flood of good things has not spread equally over the country. It has, for reasons that will appear, first flowed through and filled the reservoirs of certain sections of the community; yet there is no doubt that a very substantial quantity has overflowed those artificial dams and has effected a great amelioration in the condition of the great mass of the people. This can hardly be denied if we but recall the condition of the people in the early part of the nineteenth century. We have already seen the deplorable condition of the lower classes at the end of the eighteenth century. Their food was of the poorest kind, and their habitations, little more than kennels, the fit breeding place of disease and crime. In the early part of the nineteenth century even these poor supplies fell away,

and reduced the great mass of the people to acute distress. "The simple fact was," says Molesworth, "that wars, national debt, increase of population, corn laws, maladministration of the poor laws, and other legislation or hindrance of legislation, had reduced the great mass of the people, and especially the agricultural labourers, to the verge of starvation and despair. They were going mad with misery." We are also told by another that (in 1844) "the great masses of the people lay at this time in despairing darkness and misery. The hardly earned flour, often so bad, so rotten, that when put into the oven to bake — the famished children standing round impatient for the promised bread—it soon came, thick and warm, trickling out on to the hearth, but even then was grabbed by the little hands and eaten in a trice, the father and mother standing by hungry, helpless and heart-broken." Endless extracts could be given from writings of this period which demonstrate only too clearly the melancholy and hopeless condition of the people.

If the condition of their food supply was so appalling, the state of their dwellings was equally bad. In Walpole's "History of England" of the period about 1830, is a statement that one-tenth of the population of Manchester and one-seven of the population of Liverpool lived in cellars. A Lancashire court was thus described: "It was unpaved, and down the middle a gutter forced its way, every now and then forming pools in the holes with which the street abounded. Women

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from their doors tossed household slops of every description into the gutter ; they ran into the next pool which overflowed and stagnated. Steps from this filthy court led down to a small area where a person standing would have his head about one foot below the level of the street, and might, at the same time, without the least motion of his body, touch the window of the cellar and the damp, muddy wall right opposite. You went down one step even from this foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window panes, many of them were broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at noon-day. The smell was so foetid as almost to knock the incomer down. The children lay on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant moisture of the street oozed up." Many thousands of miserable creatures lived in such places, in the midst of all that was wretched, dissolute, loathsome and pestilential. The same terrible state of things existed in the poorer quarters of all the great towns.

At the present time, in spite of the fact that large numbers of the people feel the pinch of hunger, while many thousands are still compelled to live under conditions which recall the foulness of the early part of the century, the condition of the general body of the people shows a marked advance. Food is more abundant and of better quality ; while the houses of the working classes

(far as they fall short of what we could wish) are built with a regard for comfort and health, which was altogether wanting in the early nineteenth century. The state of things at that earlier time followed naturally enough from the conditions of the eighteenth century which we have already considered. It was due in the main to the increase in the population, combined with a change in their industrial condition, while the controlling influence among almost all classes, from the rich who governed to the poor who had no part or lot in the conduct of affairs, was an unenlightened individualism. Self-regard is still the most powerful factor in both public and private matters ; but in both it has been considerably modified during the past century.

However, we are still faced with the fact that in a country abounding in wealth, whose total income approaches two thousand millions of pounds, there exist so many insufficiently supplied with the barest food and shelter. It brings us to the question of distribution of wealth in which is involved that of employment and unemployment. It was shown that in a much earlier stage of human progress the satisfaction of man's needs depended upon his access to the natural sources of production, which are conveniently summed up in the term "land." In his earliest phases his access to the land (in its widest sense) was free and direct. It was open to him to hunt in the woods, to sow and reap the harvest. As society grew in numbers and organisation that free

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access to the land became slowly less ; till at last, with the single exception of fishing in the sea, it entirely disappeared. Few of the people can live by fishing ; and so, for all practical purposes, we find the people of England entirely deprived of direct access to the land (or the things necessary to maintain life). Access is now indirect. With the wealthy, though indirect, it is certain. They can at all times exchange part of their wealth for such things as are necessary to existence. With others, however, and this includes the vast majority of the people, access is not only indirect ; it is also uncertain. It depends upon the man's success in finding employment, *i.e.* in finding such an opportunity to labour that the fruits of his labour may be exchanged for food and other necessities. Some few, such as authors and artists, have the power of producing from their brains as their only capital things which may be exchanged for food. But their number in any society must be relatively small ; and the vast majority can only find employment from some individual capitalist who requires the labour they have to sell ; and who can in return for that labour give food or the means of obtaining it.

The industrial history of the nineteenth century is mainly a record of the increasing divorce of the worker from the "land." This separation began in the remote past. When man ceased to enjoy the free and unrestricted use of land as a means of securing his food there began for him that

long process of severance from the ultimate source of food. The gap which separated him from "nature" slowly widened through the centuries ; but the nineteenth century, with its rapidly growing population, and its complex industrial organisation, increased that gap to a chasm which can never again be bridged. It is this separation, final and complete, from the land, as the source of all things necessary to maintain life, that has brought to the modern world its most difficult problem—unemployment. It accounts for those extraordinary contrasts of the Western World—enormous wealth and lavish extravagance on the one hand, and the most abject poverty and misery on the other—before which man stands dumb and impotent. It seems so inevitably the consequence of industrial progress, and attempts to correct its effects have proved so often disastrous in their results, that many have given up the task in despair, have soothed their consciences by talk of the "survival of the fittest," or have regretfully decided that Providence has decreed it as necessary to human progress. That it was inevitable in the light of man's origin as already described is doubtless true ; but it is equally true that a real appreciation of its cause will enable man to alleviate the burden, and in course of time remove it altogether.

A simple illustration may perhaps assist to a proper understanding of this question.

Imagine a small island of a few square miles lying near a great country, but separated from it

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by a channel which its inhabitants cannot readily cross. The island is at first occupied by a few simple farmers, who are all engaged in tilling the soil. As they become more skilful in agriculture they are able to raise more than the food sufficient for themselves. A few accordingly turn to other pursuits, and devote themselves to the provision of dwellings, clothing, tools, etc., which the farmers purchase in exchange for their agricultural produce. In time, as the whole island is brought under cultivation, the numbers of the non-agricultural population increase until there exists a self contained community, part producing food and raw materials from the land, and part providing the various necessities of clothing and shelter which the community requires. All find occupation in one of these two ways. There is in normal times a sufficiency for all ; and when an occasional bad harvest arrives all share equally in the consequent distress.

As the people grow in knowledge and skill better methods both in agriculture and other industry are introduced, so that the labour of only a portion of the population is sufficient to supply all the necessities of the people. The surplus accordingly devotes itself to the provision of various luxuries, things which the people could do without, but which they are quite willing to take in exchange for the necessities which they themselves produce. All goes well. Those who produce the necessaries of life have always an outlet for their labour ; while the providers of

luxuries, if their number is small, find no difficulty in obtaining food in return for the produce of their own labour, except when, now and then, the humour or fashion of the people changes, and some find no demand for the articles they have manufactured. They change the nature of their productions to meet the changing demand, and the slight cloud passes over. A series of bad harvests comes; and the farmers with straightened means are compelled to restrict their expenditure. Necessaries they are forced to purchase in some measure. Luxuries they no longer require. The farmer suffers least. Food and shelter he still enjoys. The producers of necessities, clothing and tools, suffer considerable distress owing to the restricted demand of the farmers, and the cessation of all demand by the producers of luxuries. The latter—farthest removed from direct access to the soil—suffer most. There is no further demand for the produce of their labour. They become unemployed, and, in this individualistic island, are faced with starvation. The empty belly has small regard for the rights of property; and, to avoid the dangers threatened by a starving people, the farmers dole out perforce, and for nothing, such proportion of their food as will keep the hungry unemployed alive. Good seasons return, and the island resumes its normal appearance. The ravages of climate are repaired, and the unemployed again find opportunity to labour.

In this simple self-contained community the

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population cannot permanently increase beyond the number which the normal harvest can support. It will, however, continue to increase within these limits. Either the land will be more and more subdivided till each man is reduced to the barest existence, although each finds employment in producing it. In that case the production of luxuries ceases, there being no surplus with which to purchase them. Or on the other hand the increase in the non-agricultural population, finding no opportunity to labour or to exchange the fruits of its labour for agricultural produce, brings into existence a body of permanently unemployed who must be supported in prison or workhouse by the others. There is a limit even to this ; and disease and death keep the population in check. Individualism, or the principle of "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost" in this community of limited area would thus lead to general misery, postponed, but in the long run intensified, by every improvement in the methods of agriculture and industry.

In the actual world of things we find that such a community is incapable of industrial advance, and remains in the primitive condition of the South Pacific islands.

The people of our small island, being an enterprising and adventurous race, at length manage to cross the stretch of sea between them and the mainland. They find there a wide expanse of country, thinly peopled, the virgin soil capable of prolific harvests and the population eager to

receive the wonderful products of the island's manufactures. The adventurers find to their delight that by carrying their goods over to the mainland they can get two or three times as much corn for them as they could get from the farmers in the island ; and they accordingly begin to bring back cargoes of foodstuffs, and to send out in exchange their own manufactures. The farmer on the island finds that his wheat is no longer wanted except at a price far below what he previously received. Those who are cultivating inferior lands are compelled to give up. Some, the old and infirm, drift away into the work-houses that have become a regular institution. Others pack up their few goods, and seek work in the factories that are springing up in all directions. Here they find a ready welcome. The mills are working with restless eagerness to supply the demand of that great land across the water ; and a great stream of wealth begins to pour into the coffers of those who control these hives of industry. The latter, seeking gratification from their rapidly accumulating wealth, build great mansions and acquire large tracts in the island for conversion into parks and pleasure grounds. Year after year the area of the parks extends. Year after year the area still under cultivation shrinks ; until it seems that there will soon be not an acre of tilled ground in the island. Hardly a man can obtain food unless he can obtain employment in one of the factories or on the ships that carry their produce abroad.

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Meanwhile, the manufacturer, who is not a philanthropist but an individualist animal like the rest of the islanders, finds that he has the people at his mercy, and can secure their labour on his own terms. "Work?" says he to a starving applicant. "Yes, you can have it at ten shillings a week." "But I can't live on that, and keep my wife and family," replies the other. "'Tisn't my fault' that you've got a wife and family. Ten shillings a week—take it or leave it. By the by," he adds in a moment, "you've got a wife; and I suppose she can work. Send her along and she shall have six shillings a week. That will make sixteen—quite a fortune." "Sixteen shillings," groans the other, "and what are the children to do while their mother's away?" "Happy thought!" says the employer, "send the children along. They can do something, and I'll pay them a shilling a week, if I lose by it." The hungry man looks round. Not an inch of ground anywhere that he could scratch for a living. Nothing but palaces and gardens on the one side, and factory and workhouse on the other. Perhaps he casts his eyes upon that distant country where food grows almost for the asking. But the employer who owns the ships will not take him for nothing—and he has nothing. Soon the weary procession appears—man, wife, and children. Into the mills; into the very mines they go. Women half naked and little children hardly fit to leave home are soon toiling in the bowels of the earth for their miserable pittance of

bread ; while the stream of wealth flows in in an ever greater flood. Insatiable, the factories drive on, producing even more than the people across the water can purchase ; and soon great stocks of goods fill the warehouses from floor to roof.

It cannot go on for ever. The country for which these goods are destined is troubled with bad harvests. Its people can no longer buy goods in the same degree as before. The manufacturers have great piles of things which they cannot dispose of. They shut down half their mills, and turn the employés into the street. The miserable wretches have nowhere to turn, and appeal to the employer to support them till trade revives again. "Had they not given their very flesh and blood all these years !" "A fine thing, truly !" replies the other. "If I were to support all the out-of-works, I should soon be in the workhouse myself. I daresay it is very hard ; but you should have been more provident, and laid by for a rainy day, and now . . ." he quotes the law of supply and demand, and shuts the door. Of the unemployed, some find their way to prison, some to the workhouse, and most gravitate to that rubbish heap of society—the slums of the growing city. Trade revives slowly in course of time, and many find their way back to work ; but the population has grown, and a considerable number—old, infirm and ablebodied—are permanently unable to find an opportunity to labour. There appears an increasing section of the population dependent solely on casual work, not

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knowing from day to day where the food for the day or shelter for the night is to come from. Worse still, this state of things brings in its train a section of unemployable and unfit. Misery, starvation, disease, and all their dismal train leave their mark on subsequent generations ; and even in the most prosperous periods the lunatic asylum, the workhouses, the prisons, and the slums of the city are crowded with a population without light, without hope, without home.

Freed from the many other issues that make the social problem so complex and confusing, the above represents in its broad outline the history of employment in England during the nineteenth century, as it does that of every other country that has made any considerable advance in industry. The utter impotence and hopelessness of the unemployed to-day are without a parallel in the history of the human race ; and it is but the inevitable consequence of political liberty and industrial advance working in an individualist society.

It is not that production is at fault. There is enough and to spare for a much greater population than now exists. It has long been recognised that the question is one of distribution. Most of the attempts that have been made to correct this evil have been directed to the question of distribution. Some few have sought a remedy in the realm of production. The failure of all but illustrates the inevitable nature of this disease in a society that is merely an aggregate of self-

regarding units ; and suggests the only direction in which a remedy may be hoped for. The contemplation of these social miseries has too often the effect of inflaming the mind against the individuals who happen to occupy the positions of economic and political power. Such feelings, natural as they may appear, are not only unjustified, but do themselves tend to perpetuate the evil. The fault does not lie in the individual capitalist. Nor can it be said that the fault lies in the system, since any radical change in the system in the present condition of human nature would have produced even greater ills. The root of it all is to be found in those primary qualities of living matter ; and we may face the future more hopefully if we recognise the human problem as a natural phenomenon whose laws and conditions may be discovered and controlled.

The failures in the attempts at reform that have already been made have invariably been due to the fact that man is in his origin a self-regarding animal. The early man did not labour for the pleasure of the thing. He "worked" for a living—hunting and fishing—when driven by hunger to do so ; and when that compulsion was suspended he ceased from his labour and devoted himself to occupations which he found more agreeable—generally a lazy idling born of satiety. This early instinct of the animal has manifested itself in all the attempts to correct the ill distribution of wealth, and has brought the best intentioned efforts to disaster.

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Without reverting to the free corn distribution of the Romans, we may turn to the Middle Ages for an illustration of the fact. The monasteries were the depositaries of great wealth which was supposed, among other things, to give support to the needy. Their extensive almsgiving was designed to effect some redistribution of the wealth of the country, and to relieve the distress of unemployment. The recipient of the doles, like the rest of his countrymen, was a self-regarding animal, not only looking at all things, but feeling all things from the point of view of his own comfort. A free gift from the monks was a pleasanter source of livelihood than the hard conditions of daily toil. It not only spared him the necessity of working; but it spared him the equally unpleasant necessity of seeking work. Accordingly there appeared an ever-growing class of mendicants whose numbers not only caused a heavy drain upon the fruit of the country's industry, but threatened to sap the very source of production. Attempts were made by the enactment of severe vagrancy laws and by the expeditious execution of masterless men on the smallest pretexts to keep this evil within bounds; but in spite of this the disease continued to spread. The abolition of the monasteries under Henry VIII. brought the country face to face with a great population suddenly cut off from their means of livelihood. The State was compelled to take up in some measure the work of the dispossessed monks; and the Poor Law of

Elizabeth threw upon the various parishes the burden of supporting their poor. From that time onward the State has recognised, not the right of the poor to support, but the necessity for its own preservation that it should provide a place where the hungry could in the last resort obtain food. It has done that under compulsion, and, as is natural under such circumstances, made the conditions under which poor-law relief could be obtained as distasteful as possible in the hope that many would find support outside rather than undergo the experience. That attempt to cure the evil of unemployment was also a failure. It no doubt forced some to bestir themselves to find work who otherwise would have settled on the rates; it no doubt forced many an old creature to starve in solitude rather than suffer the shame and ignominy of seeking parish relief. Many, too, who would have secured direct State support remained independent and lived upon the community as an innumerable army of thieves and prostitutes. But the problem of unemployment remained as before; and the hopelessness of attempting its cure by any system of artificial redistribution of wealth drove statesmen to prevent any dangerous outbreak by rigorous repression, and under that iron cloak to leave the evil to take its course.

Attempts have also at times been made by the workers themselves to find a remedy. They sought in the old craft gilds and in the more recent trades unions to limit the mutual com-

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petition of the workers, and so strengthen their hands in securing from the employers a bigger share of their joint produce. They have succeeded to a very considerable extent in effecting some redistribution of wealth in this way; but they did so by increasing the barrier which stood between the unemployed and opportunity to work. To the extent to which their action was devoted to increasing wages, they left the problem of unemployment untouched. These purely individualistic attempts failed, as under the circumstances they were bound to fail. The guilds and the unions have never included more than a relatively small proportion of the workers; and their existence has been mainly a struggle against the hungry population outside their ranks.

On the other hand, certain noble spirits, impressed with the urgency of the question, and seeing no hope of any cure in an individualistic society, have endeavoured to establish small communities from which the spirit of individualism should be rigidly excluded. These too have quickly come to naught. The root self-regarding instinct, still the most powerful of human motives, could not be restrained by the silken bonds of a voluntary communism. These societies have continued for a time under the momentum which the first enthusiasm imparted; but before long the disruptive force of individualism has made its influence felt. Small jealousies and discontents have grown up within the community, strengthened by the allurements of the old world outside its

borders, till at length the members of the society have drifted away and been swallowed up again in the restless world from which they had endeavoured to escape.

Among other solutions of the past generation may be mentioned the demand of the workers that they should work short time, or shorter hours, so that (among other things) there would be room for the unemployed. Fewer hours per man, and more men! That cry shows a great advance over its predecessors, and what element of hope it has for the future lies in the fact that (in spirit) it goes outside the borders of individualism, and suggests a sacrifice on the part of those in work for the benefit of their less fortunate fellows. Other things being equal, however, the proposal is illusory unless fewer hours per man means also less wage per man. On this rock the experiment has split. The worker, while sympathising with the unemployed, has not been able to so far free himself from the individualist instinct as to sacrifice a part of his wage so that all might have a share. When brought to the point he has urged, and within limits justly urged, that with short hours he could produce as much as under the harsher conditions. Reduced hours have been of advantage to the man in employment; but, limited by the instinct of self regard, they have left the real problem of unemployment untouched. It is a seed full of hope, but it has not yet struck root.

During the past few years the growing pressure

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of the problem has compelled the government to take note of it. Labour, unable to find a way out of itself, has demanded—and in view of its vital importance rightly demanded—that the State should take up the task of solving it. It has been urged that various productive enterprises should be undertaken—afforestation, reclamation of foreshores, and others of a nonproductive kind such as extensive public works. So far as such proposals are concerned, although they may ameliorate the condition of a certain number of the unemployed, it is unfortunately clear that they do nothing to effect a permanent cure. It may be that a hundred thousand men might find productive and permanent employment in this way, but the rising tide of population would soon fill again the vacancies in the ranks of the unemployed. The government, conscious of the disasters that have resulted from past experiments, moves naturally with extreme caution.

This is the point at which the country has arrived in this question of unemployment, or more truly this problem of distribution. It is one, perhaps the greatest, of the evils the individualistic origin of man has laid upon the race; and it remains for the future to show whether the growing force of the social instinct will provide relief.

Those secondary questions referred to at the beginning of this chapter in which the welfare of the human race is so closely associated also show a remarkable development during the past

century. The mental advance of the people of this country is astonishing, not only to the extent to which it has proceeded in a small number, but for the degree in which it has affected the great body of the citizens. The progress of science among those who are specially devoted to it distinguishes the nineteenth century from any of its predecessors ; but although scientific knowledge in the few may do much to improve the material wellbeing of the whole, the real progress of the race depends on the extent to which the mental capacity of the average man has improved. That there has been a very marked change for the better is beyond dispute. The education (rough as it is) which is now not only within the reach of all, but is to a very great extent forced upon all, together with the cheap literature which is beginning to reach every class, has stimulated in the general body of the people an interest in the world about them which was altogether wanting in their grandfathers. The methods of education may be improved, the literary taste of the public is open to criticism, no doubt ; but a substantial step has been taken towards making the man not only an eating, sleeping, working animal, but a thinking animal, with consequences for the future which it would be difficult to measure. We need only consider the great attention that education secures in the country to-day, the increase both in numbers and efficiency of elementary and secondary schools, of technical institutes, of colleges and universities, to be satisfied of the

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extraordinary change the past century has witnessed in the mental life of the people. It is a change which must make for the welfare of the race; but it must also be admitted that it has introduced an element of great complexity into some of the problems that face the present generation.

The secondary wants which from the earliest times have stimulated the insatiable demands of the possessing class have kept pace with the rapidly growing wealth of the country. There is to-day a lavish extravagance among the moneyed classes in England and America (the most typical of modern industrial societies) which passes description. A great part of the inventive power of man is devoted to providing new opportunities of expenditure and display for that section of society, many of whom are in very truth inebriated with excess of wealth. Palatial mansions, filled with every comfort and luxury that modern taste and invention can supply; luxurious yachts which cost a fortune to build and another to maintain; innumerable dresses, each of which would keep an ordinary family for well-nigh a year; jewels which in other days would have represented a fortune beyond the dreams of avarice—these have been insufficient to satisfy the craze to spend. The riot of the gaming table, the insanity of freak dinners, and other things equally senseless have been resorted to in the anxiety to derive pleasure from spending. While added to all this is the pride of wealth, which is

ever at hand to provoke display when other things fail. The craving for pleasure and excitement has reached a pitch beyond conception ; the needy individual on ten thousand a year is not infrequently too poor to pay his tradesmen. These secondary wants are so imperative that deprivation of a small part of them causes genuine misery to the unfortunate victims of that very real disease ; while the mad anxiety to compete with others in this race to destruction forces many to acts of gross dishonesty and cruelty, which in saner moments they could not contemplate without shame.

If this infirmity has proceeded to almost incredible lengths among the wealthy, it is equally prevalent in the middle class. It is not the actual, but the relative, magnitude of the expenditure that is the cause of so much mischief ; and in this great numbers of the middle class fail equally with the more wealthy. How common an experience it is for the expenditure to outstrip the income. Of the great number of bankrupts who yearly pass through the Courts "living beyond my income" is by far the most frequent cause alleged for the pecuniary difficulties of the individual. This canker of extravagant display has eaten into the heart of the middle class well-nigh as deeply as among the more wealthy ; and with them, as with the latter, it not only serves to rob the victim of real happiness, but hardens his heart against the great mass of poverty which is constantly crying for relief.

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Nor may we stop with the middle class. The working classes have not escaped the contagion. The vast mass of the poorer people have certainly not the means, and probably have little desire to indulge in expensive pleasures. Desire comes with experience, and experience does not come to those whose efforts are fully occupied in the search for daily bread. There are, however, among the better paid of the workers great numbers who share the failing common to the other classes. We might perhaps find a better excuse for them, if we were seeking excuses, in the drab, colourless lives so many are compelled to live. The excitement of the race-course, the public house, the music-hall, may find its chief cause in the dreary background of their daily lives; but the fact remains that these secondary wants exercise an almost irresistible influence on many, demanding gratification even at the expense of the food, clothing, and shelter of wives and families. It is idle to talk of moral censure, to declare that the world ought not to do so, in the hope that it might see the error of its ways and amend. The hard fact is that this characteristic of human nature has evolved as we have endeavoured to show; and that it does present an obstacle to reform which all the denunciation in the world cannot remove. It is one of humanity's problems to-day; and it forms a factor in the great social question whose strength it would be folly to ignore.

What has the nineteenth century done to modify

the sharp distinction of classes which formed so distinctive a feature of other times?

At an earlier period we found a landowning and governing class separated by the sharpest line from the rest of the community. Later there appeared an industrial middle class, cut off on the one side from their traditional superiors, and distinguished in an almost equal degree from the lower class of workers. The power of the middle class had long been increasing; but at the beginning of the nineteenth century there was still a broad and well marked distinction between the captains of industry and the lords of the soil. The extraordinary mechanical progress of the nineteenth century, however, made industry the chief source of wealth. The purse of the landowning class as a body shrank till the want of money made the power of money too strong to be resisted. The leaders of commerce and industry were at the same time accumulating great stores of riches; and as the free and easy methods by which the barons in the Middle Ages would have appropriated this wealth were no longer available, the gold of the wealthy middle class began to secure for its possessors a recognition which they might otherwise have sighed for in vain. The growing complexity of both internal and external affairs gave to gold the influence that the sword had once possessed; while the ever growing secondary wants, which gold alone could satisfy, forced the aristocracy of birth more and more into communion with the aristocracy of

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money, till the distinction between them began to fade away. There has been of late years an increasing interchange between them; the aristocrat has found his way into trade, and the trader into the peerage, until there is little to distinguish them beyond a sentimental regard for ancient birth. To-day for all practical purposes the old aristocracy and the wealthy section of the middle class have become merged. Their interests are identified, and as a factor in modern problems they are rapidly becoming one.

Just as in the remote past the birth of industry called into existence a middle class intermediary between the governors and governed; so in recent times the rapid extension of industry and the growing complexity of its organisation have called into being a considerable class (sometimes called the lower middle class) between the earlier middle class and the great body of the workers. This new class consists of salaried employés holding positions of trust and managing or supervising the general body of labour, and also of small capitalists who both labour themselves and employ others. The natural tendency of man in an individualist society is to seek the favour of those more advantageously placed than himself, much as the flower turns to the sun; and so we find the general attitude of the lower middle class has been one of attraction towards those next above, and one of repulsion from those below. Desire to identify themselves with their immediate superiors has led this lower section to imitate the

habits and to sympathise with the aspirations of the latter ; and has, since political power came to them, made of them a never faltering ally of the "interests" in the electoral field.

Below these has lain a great amorphous mass of labour, properly described as "the masses," inasmuch as they present no uniform characteristics distinguishing them as a whole from the rest of the community, except perhaps their relative poverty. Nor have they been in the past united by any sense of common interest. Education, training, economic necessity, all have served to keep them as a mass of isolated units. They have not even felt the bonds of a common distress ; and the gap between the well-paid skilled labourer and the great voiceless mass of abject poverty has been as wide as that between himself and the upper classes. The past century has, however, witnessed a movement in the mass. It has shown a tendency to crystallise. In the industrial world as trades unions, in the political world as a labour party, it has begun to develop a class consciousness which foreshadows a change in the centre of power in this and indeed in other countries, whose effects for good or ill must make themselves felt in every corner of the globe.

The general character of the government during the past century has followed, with a halting step, the changes above described. In no instance in history has the governing class admitted to a share in that power any other class except on compulsion ; nor does it appear that in an

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individualist age those who "have" (whether power or wealth) can, from their very nature, voluntarily share that power or that wealth with others. The hypothesis of a self-regarding individual excludes it. We have already seen how the middle class secured a share in the government of the country solely from the necessities of barons and king; and that influence became more firmly established as the needs of the old governing class increased. Industry would never have secured a voice in controlling the affairs of the nation had it not been in a position to purchase it with its gold, or, as in other countries, by the strength of its arm. The new possessors of power were quite as reluctant to share it with the classes below them as the old aristocracy had been. Extensions of the Franchise have never been granted on mere principles of equity. They have been given either when they could no longer be withheld, or when the reluctant gift was necessary to secure some advantage otherwise unattainable, or to avoid a danger otherwise inevitable. Of late years the operation has been coloured by some touch of philosophic radicalism; but the mainspring of these changes has been, not a recognition of others' rights, but an appreciation of the giver's own necessities. The Reform of 1832 was compelled by fears of violence; while later measures have been partly from fear of the growing strength of the voiceless masses, and, even more, as party operations to secure advantage at the polls as a mark of gratitude from the newly

enfranchised people. Individuals may have been animated by the loftiest sense of right; but the general body of vote holders has been influenced for the most part by these self-regarding considerations. Even to-day, when ideals begin to play so considerable a part in political affairs, the greatest reluctance is shown by the voting classes as a whole to the admission of the voteless, men and women, to their ranks. However, whatever the motive, the central fact of nineteenth century politics has been the very great extension of the franchise till we are almost within reach of manhood suffrage, and probably not very far removed from adult suffrage.

How have the newly enfranchised classes used their powers?

It is interesting to recall the gloomy forebodings which filled the minds of the governing classes as each new step was discussed. They contemplated nothing less than the complete destruction of the constitution, a débâcle in which king, lords, and all the most cherished rights of Englishmen would sink in one common wreck. Property would no longer be respected; and to give the masses the vote, animated as they were by predatory instincts only, and impelled by unscrupulous and self-seeking agitators, would introduce an era of spoliation which would rapidly reduce the country to ruin. These fears were very natural. The classes could not but be conscious of the misery which marked the lives of great numbers of the lower world. It had brought the Revolution and the Terror in France; and

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now if the machinery of government were surrendered in England their new masters would be certain to overthrow the existing state of things, and sacrifice everything and everybody to their own interests. Who indeed, other than a lunatic, would entrust the keys of the Bank of England to the care of a band of hungry robbers—and so on. Yet the fact is that beyond securing for the masses a little more attention from Parliament, these dreaded political adventurers left the governing power in the hands of the classes who had previously enjoyed it. The truth appears to be that the average man is never for any length of time governed by his reason. At moments, under the spur of some special excitement, he may consciously direct his efforts towards some specific object; but for the most part in his present stage of mental development he is moved by instinct chiefly, or, if we will, by ingrained prejudice. The functional memory of living matter, as has been already pointed out, gives to every organism the power of recording past experiences, and the tendency to repeat them—a tendency which, as part of its very matter, it hands on to its offspring. One of the earliest experiences of social man was submission to established authority; and countless generations of that condition of subjection have bred in the man an instinct of submission to those whom he has been accustomed to regard as his superiors. The natural disposition of the average man to-day is one of unquestioning obedience to his betters.

So powerful indeed is this feature in his character that hardly anything short of the blackest and most hopeless misery will drive him to revolt. The natural leader of the commoner, as the result of the conditions of thousands of years, is the aristocrat; and, except when under the stimulus of exceptional emotion, he follows the lead—or votes for—the aristocrat as the most natural thing in the world. He does not require to be argued into it; he is naturally disposed to do so. On the other hand, the commoner has not behind him traditional obedience to a fellow commoner, but traditional equality with a touch of hostility; and he has consequently a natural disposition—an instinct—to claim equality with him. Hence the phenomenon of a democracy electing time after time an aristocratic government. Hence the strange sight of a working man resenting the occupation by another working man of an important salaried post in the government, while he makes no comment on the many aristocrats who hold similar posts. Hence the still more singular spectacle of a working class constituency electing a member of the classes, devoted to the interests, and rejecting one of themselves, devoted to the masses. It is not in the main the result of petty jealousy, but the consequence of this deep-rooted instinct. Many of the thinking section of the working classes are shaking off the influence of the past, and are consciously endeavouring to govern their actions by the necessities of the future. The great mass of the workers, however,

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are still under the influence of instinct ; and this fact gives to the upper classes a power which nothing short of the most reckless folly can disturb.

In nothing perhaps has the nineteenth century shown a greater or more hopeful advance than in the administration of justice. A century ago not only were the criminal laws harsh almost beyond expression, but they were administered in a spirit of callous indifference equally revolting. Many things have combined to bring about the happy change that has since taken place. The spread of education, the growing influence of the people, the wider diffusion of newspapers which have brought home to the individual some perception of the horrors of the older system, the real moral improvement that has accompanied the growth of the social instinct, all have aided in humanising the laws and lessening the rigour with which they have been put in operation. It is true that in many ways the influence of the past is still with us—an offence against property is still more severely punished than offences against the person, some judges still show towards the common offender the utmost rigour the law allows, while a distinct bias in favour of the offender of social position is still noticeable ; but for the most part the Bench is occupied by Judges who bring to their difficult office a spirit of humanity deserving all praise, who spare no efforts in arriving at just decisions, who give the most anxious consideration to all the circumstances of the case in meting out punishment, and who also

are moved by a sincere desire to make the law a means of reform for the offender instead of a mere instrument of vengeance and repression. The administration of justice is one of the fields in which the social instinct has been able to make itself most felt ; and the results justify an optimistic belief in the future.

The sphere of religion also offers ample evidence of the growth of a real social spirit in the people. The movement of religion, both in its opinions and its activities, has been very marked during the past century. On the surface it seems to have undergone a number of violent changes of the most diverse character. Looking at its external manifestation—from the Age of Reason during the French Revolution, through the periodic Revivals, the aggressive secularism of the Mid-Victorian period, to the Ritualistic movement and the Nonconformist counter-movement of the end of the century—it presents a series of inconsequential changes diametrically opposed to the slow and gradual march of evolution. Nevertheless, below the surface, almost unaffected by the storms that raged above, there has been a steady development similar to that which has marked other spheres of human thought and feeling. The Christian Religion has always presented in its theory two distinct sides. There has been its dogma in the field of belief (marking more especially the relations between man and his Creator) ; and there have also been its moral injunctions, marking the man's relations with his

fellow man. These two characteristics have been quite distinct. Lecky remarks in his *History of European Morals* that "in the first two centuries, when dogma played little part in the Church, christians displayed a high state of moral purity." "In the Byzantine empire the people constantly wrangled about their theological subtilties ; but their lives were vicious and depraved, and their civilisation the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilisation has yet assumed. In Asia Minor the Christian faith introduced among the people a principle of interminable and implacable dissension ; but it scarcely tempered in any appreciable degree their luxury or their sensuality. During the past three centuries the decadence of theological influence has been one of the most invariable signs and measures of our progress." Many other extracts could be given dwelling upon the gulf between theological opinion and moral conduct. The simple explanation appears to be that Christianity in effect was a junction between two distinct streams—the old belief in the gods (dissociated from any moral teaching) and the pure stream of morality that flowed from the fountain source of the Christian faith. The history of the religious life of recent times has been marked by the slow fading away of the crude material conceptions of the gods of pagan times. This change in the mind of the people has occasioned periodic revolutions or reformations in which the nature and character of the Deity was readjusted to correspond once more with the

general feeling of the age. This process has been constantly repeated. On each occasion some part of the materialism of the ancient dogma has been shed ; and on each occasion the Church has been split, part clinging with blind tenacity to the traditional belief and declaring for the literal interpretation of the scriptures, part embracing the new opinions, assured that it has at last found the truth. These are but incidents in the revolt of the growing intellect of mankind against a crude material conception of the Ultimate Reality which it can no longer accept. In the Established Church, with its somewhat rigid discipline and cast iron formularies, the change is mainly marked by a tacit neglect of the horrors of eternal punishment. But in the freer atmosphere of some of the Nonconformist Churches the intellectual advance has found expression till hardly a shred of the old dogma remains, and the man's conceptions of the Deity is scarcely to be distinguished from the purest theism.

Concurrently with the decay of the dogmatic side of the common religion there has been a steady advance in the field of morals. Many an individual clergyman in the Established Church applies himself with a devotion beyond all praise to the service of the poor ; while in the Christian Socialists a definite body has arisen in the Church whose main object is, within the sphere of religion, to apply the moral teachings of Christianity in all the affairs of life. Among Nonconformists we may note the growth of institutional churches

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whose aim is less to spread dogmatic belief in the tenets of those bodies than to use the inspiration and enthusiasm of religion in aiding the practical work of social service. The various religious revivals that have occurred from time to time during recent years have been for the most part indications of the strivings of the social instinct to shake off the deadweight of individualist self-regard that has so long dominated the relations between man and man. Religion has been essentially a thing of the emotions, and it is in that field of the emotions that the social spirit has obtained freest expression. If these outbursts have been confined for the most part to the poorer classes, we have but a repetition of the moral enthusiasm of the early christians, and a further instance of the fact that the social instinct is developed most among the poor.

The striking fact in modern religious life is the tendency to leave dogma to shift for itself, and to turn the attention to the field of social service. An exactly similar phenomenon is observable in the secularist world. Just as the French a hundred years ago, in wild revolt against the governing class and all their works, threw over religion and endeavoured to enthrone in their temples the pure spirit of Fraternity, so in the second half of the nineteenth century another purely secularist movement arose in the same spirit of revolt against intolerant dogma ; and not only sought to overthrow the churches, but preached a social morality too lofty for the

average man to attain. These movements, too, in their anti-dogmatic side have well-nigh faded out of sight ; and the secularist of to-day is mainly concerned with the social amelioration of the people. We thus find in the field of religion a tendency to cease acrimonious disputes about beliefs, to appreciate the honesty and sincerity of opponents, to agree to differ on matters of faith, and to join hands in the common work of raising the fallen and bringing relief to the distressed.

It has often been lamented by many earnest men, who still adhere tenaciously to the old dogmas, that this weakening of religious faith, this surrender of the old anthropological conceptions of theology, could but result in atheism ; and by removing the religious terrors from the mind of the evil doer would lead direct to anarchy and immorality. We need not recall the history of the Christian era to show that religious belief and moral conduct are quite distinct things, and that each has commonly existed in inverse ratio to the strength of the other. It is sufficient here to point out that atheism—meaning by that term the intellectual conviction that there is no self-existent, intelligent power above man—has never found appreciable support among the great mass of the people. Its failure to hold the minds of the people for any length of time has had nothing to do with its own intrinsic merits. The truth or falsehood of its assumptions has not been the determining factor in its relative failure. Its

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failure has been due to the fact that the average man has still an "instinctive" belief in a supernatural power. That instinct, as we have seen, took its rise in the earliest period of human existence; and although the crude images in which that idea has been materialised have from time to time been rejected till very little remains, the instinctive belief is still there, and is likely to remain for generations to come. The church that insists upon the dogma of an older time will infallibly decay; while that which endeavours in its theology to reflect the changing religious conceptions of man, and by its activity in the field of social service affords to the man a sphere in which his social instinct may find free expression, will not only hold its position in the world, but will draw to it many who at present lie altogether outside the influence of religion.

We may gather from what has been said that the Social Instinct has made a very real advance during the past hundred years; and there is ample evidence in other directions to justify us in believing so. As has already been explained, that phase of human nature which is commonly known as the social instinct may be divided into two parts, justly described as the "lower" and the "higher." The former lies in the passive forbearance of the individual in his relations with others. He loses the antagonistic feeling, the instinct to attack or escape from his fellow man, which characterised him in his ante-social stage. He is content to pursue his own ends in so far as they

can be sought without directly interfering with others. This feeling grew up at first between individuals who were forced by circumstances into frequent contact, and extended by degrees to other individuals with whom such communion was less frequent or less intimate. In the same way the higher, or active, phase of the social instinct, the innate tendency to act in the interest of others, arose between individuals who were closely associated in their daily lives, whose circumstances were similar, who felt the same need of sympathy and assistance. We naturally expect to find that in the earlier stages of this new quality man is willing to do many little acts of kindness and self-sacrifice for his neighbour or his friend, while he still remains quite indifferent to the needs of those living in the next street. The local feeling must be general throughout the community before a wider, a less parochial, feeling can develop from it; and moreover it may exist in this local form without apparently influencing those public matters which history records. It is doubtless true that in past times when, outwardly the people seemed given up to brutality and vice there still existed a great deal of this active goodwill between intimate neighbours.

The nineteenth century is marked by a considerable extension of this desirable quality. Slowly but surely the people have been acquiring a feeling of active goodwill towards, and a willingness at some sacrifice to relieve the distress

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of, those whom they have never seen and are never likely to see. The legislation of the past century teems with measures prompted by this active social instinct. It has abolished female labour in the mines ; it has lessened the hours and improved the conditions of labour in many industries ; it has insisted upon better sanitation in factories, upon greater regard for life on ships ; it has granted to the workman compensation for injuries, and has insisted upon the best protection possible where machinery is employed ; it has pulled down slums and erected decent dwellings ; it has provided public parks ; it has done much to humanise the poor law ; and at the present moment the energies of Parliament are largely devoted to schemes of social reform designed to improve the general condition of the worker. The whole of these measures have been the result of the growth of the social instinct, of its emergence from its local phase into the wider field of public affairs. Not only has it made this ineffaceable impression upon the legislation of the country, it is also seen in the wonderful stream of charitable subscriptions, amounting to many millions a year. Let there be a great disaster in some distant corner of the world, or a pathetic case in our police courts, and at once an appeal for help meets with a response which no earlier age can parallel. The very millionaires, who by the exercise of their individualist instincts have piled up huge fortunes, are feeling this growing impulse to do something for their fellow

creatures. That impulse may find a vent in the establishing of many libraries, or in the founding of great universities, or in the provision of scholarships, or the erection of almshouses for the aged poor. Whatever shape their active goodwill may take, the daily instances of their benefactions show how great has been the advance of this social instinct of late years, and how powerful an influence it is beginning to exercise on human affairs.

One further point may be touched on before closing this brief survey of the nineteenth century. To what extent has this growing spirit of goodwill affected the relations between the different communities of the civilised world? One might be tempted to think, judging from the enormous burden of military and naval expenditure under which Europe is staggering, that primitive barbarism still governed the international relations of the modern world. The fact, however, is not so hopeless. In considering the early history of mankind it appeared that the original antagonism between human animals yielded to a more tolerant feeling only as the result of frequent and habitual association. This influence constantly modified the relations between members of the same society, while it left the old hostility between different societies untouched. Not until commerce, with its more or less peaceful association, had begun to bring the nations into contact did any improvement take place; and even then, inasmuch as commerce was carried on

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in a purely self-regarding spirit, the experiences of the peoples concerned were not such as to provoke much goodwill. The trader was tolerated because of the advantages arising from the commerce, or because of the threats of the stronger nation if its trade was interfered with. Even under these comparatively unfavourable auspices a very small section of each nation came into association with members of the other. The general body of the people knew nothing of the foreigner, except from reports of his wealth which provoked envy, or stories of his strange habits which induced contempt, or the bloody details of war which stimulated his hate. Until a quite recent period these constituted the sole relation between different peoples, and the old blind hostility continued almost unchecked. The nineteenth century, however, witnessed a considerable change in these international relations. Those various circumstances which served to create a better feeling between the people of the same country could not fail to colour in some measure their attitude towards other peoples. At the same time the enormous growth of commerce, the wide-spreading press which has done much to bring the people into contact with each other, the growing practice of foreign travel, together with the mutual co-operation of nations for purposes of defence or offence, have created between the nations somewhat of that habitual association which in earlier times broke down the barrier of hostility between individual men, and made them

capable of social existence. It is true that these new relations have been in existence so short a time that, though they may have created the habit, they have not yet generated the instinct of mutual tolerance; and it is still easy to provoke the old animal hate. Nevertheless the seeds of tolerance and goodwill have been planted, and many influences are at work to bring them to fruition.



CHAPTER XIV

THE FUTURE

SUCH are the problems of humanity in the special form in which they present themselves to the Western World. They seem to offer a tangled web beyond the wit of man to unravel ; and yet the essential factors of those problems are in themselves relatively simple. They may perhaps be summed up under the heads : the self-regarding or individualistic instinct of the human being (common to him with the rest of the organic world), the other-regarding or social instinct (a product of evolution), and the productive powers of nature. Of these we may say that the productive powers of nature are ample for all the calls that may be made upon her for many a century to come ; while the extent to which those powers are exercised, and the way in which the produce is distributed, turn upon the relative strength of those two human instincts.

We may well ask what shape these problems are likely to take in the future, whether mankind will find a satisfactory solution to them, or whether they will stand as an eternal barrier between the reality of man's actual condition and the ideals

upon which his hopes are centred. The secrets of the future are well kept; and, interesting as the task might be, it would be futile to speculate upon the exact nature of future problems, and upon the character of the social and political machine man may devise to meet them. The most we can hope to do is to see dimly a little way before us. But even that narrow outlook, if it enables us to guide our feet with some degree of certainty, must offer incalculable advantages over that blind stumbling in the dark which has marked the journey of the race hitherto. Our only hope is that as we come to understand more fully the root forces of the human organism, and the influence they have upon his circumstances in the long process of evolution, we may be able to apply the lessons of the past, and by their help follow the developments of those forces a little way into the future.

The great obstacle to any clear deductions as to the future lies in the fact that some of the factors in our problem are variable. Evolution is not a steady progress in any one direction. The line of its movement is determined by "accidental variations" whose permanence depends upon their relation to the general condition of the organism at the moment. We may, however, form some idea as to the general direction in which mankind is moving at the present moment; and perhaps learn in some measure to guide its motion towards the ideal which specially appeals to us. With this object let us take up the thread at the

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point to which it had brought us in the last chapter.

Of the many problems that face humanity, that which turns on the provision of man's primary wants transcends all others. It stands in the forefront of modern questions, and, whether as the problem of poverty, the submerged tenth, or (in another aspect) unemployment, it is agitating the minds of the people of the Western World almost to the exclusion of every other. As we have seen, the difficulty is not due to the deficiencies of nature ; she gives enough and to spare, so that no mere increase in the productive arts will help us. Experience has shown that the individualistic instinct in man has been the cause both of his wonderful advance in wealth, and of the no less wonderful advance in its unequal distribution. It has also taught us that the mere artificial diminution of this inequality in the shape of charity (whether private or national) results in a diminution in production. The social instinct would correct that fault if it were strong enough ; but at present it is too weak. We have then to consider in what way (if in any) the State may effect some measure of redistribution under present circumstances, without the concurrent lessening of production ; and also whether the State can do anything to strengthen the social instinct on which the final solution of the question must depend.

Taking the former of these questions, the community may be divided into two classes—

those capable of productive labour, and those incapable of such labour. As regards the latter it is evident that, as they do not produce already, nothing that the State may do can diminish production (except by some reflex action on the producers). The "incapable" class consists of individuals below the age of productive labour (children), those above such age (the old), and those otherwise incapable (the mentally or physically deficient). If it is considered "desirable" that all the individuals in the community should be satisfied as regards the primary wants (food and shelter), it is clear that the incapable class must have those things provided for them, seeing that they are unable to labour and secure them for themselves. So far as those incapables are alone concerned, the redistribution of wealth in such measure as to supply their primary wants can be effected by the State without reducing the productive power of the community (the special difficulty against which we have to guard). The State already does that, reluctantly and compulsorily, by the provision of workhouses, pauper lunatic asylums, and prisons. The growth of the moral instinct in the State may be expected to lead to its doing voluntarily and with goodwill what it now does from mere self-regarding considerations. The strength of this movement even at the present moment is manifest enough if we but look at the legislation actually effected, or the proposals which are being pressed on Parliament—the feeding and clothing of school children, and

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their medical inspection, and old age pensions. The really great advance of the social instinct throughout the nation is illustrated in the attitude of parties towards these proposals. A very small minority object to them *in toto*. Of others, some, impressed with the necessities of the children and the aged, insist upon them, and minimise or deny the possible dangers, resting on the fact that the well-being of the nation demands them, and that as the parties concerned are not producers the proposals cannot result in diminished production. The other section, while approving of the spirit of the proposal, dwells upon the reflex action on producers, asserting that each measure, while directly relieving non-producers, does also indirectly relieve producers (parents, etc.), and that in the present condition of human nature such a step must tend to diminish the productive activities of the latter. To this it may be answered that (as regards the parents of the children) inasmuch as they do not, many of them, already produce to supply the children's needs, their productive industry would not be diminished by the provision of those needs from other sources; while if the State compels the parents, where able, to pay the cost, not only would the negligent parents be forced to perform a duty to their children which they do not perform at present, but the better parents would be under no temptation to fall back into negligence as might conceivably in some instances be the case did the State pay the cost without looking to the parents at all. In the

case of old age pensions a similar state of opinion prevails. All are agreed that the aged poor should be decently provided for. Some urge that the pensions should be given without further question, on the simple ground that under the present industrial system the mass of the poorer class *cannot* earn enough to live and save. The other side at most claim that to provide for old age is to relieve either the children of a natural duty, or the person himself of the necessity of thrift in his capable years ; and that the productive and saving instincts of the people will suffer. The measure of truth in this is that if pensions are restricted to a certain small income (pension plus savings not exceeding some fixed amount) there will be less inducement to save, when, after a point, each pound saved means so much less pension. To this it is replied that by giving the pension irrespective of income that discouragement to thrift is removed. As to the merits of these various contentions we need say nothing. The important thing to observe is that, from the complete self-regarding indifference of an older time, we have advanced to such a point that the community as a whole is desirous of relieving these classes. We are justified in believing that this progress in the other-regarding instincts of the community will continue, and that these proposals of relief will be adopted, accompanied by any measures that appear possible to prevent any slackening on the part of the productive section of the people. We might perhaps

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venture farther, and suggest that in time this maintenance of the "incapable" classes will appear an elementary moral duty in the State ; while failure in any State to do this will earn for it the reprobation of more civilised communities.

As regards the "capable" sections of the people, there is a growing feeling in the public mind that they should not be left to suffer helpless and unrelieved distress. We have so far advanced in our moral evolution as a people as to conceive it a *duty*, and not merely an abhorred necessity, to relieve such distress. Here again we find the great body of the community divided—not for and against the desirability of such relief. Part, whom we may call the idealist section, demand that it should be relieved whatever the consequences. The others, mindful of the effects of State relief in the past in lessening the productive activities of the people, deprecate such State relief unless and until it can be given under such conditions as will avoid this effect on production. The history of human evolution that has been outlined in previous chapters gives reason to believe that the utmost the State can do in the matter, in an individualist atmosphere is to open up new sources of production (afforestation, etc) which will do something to relieve the present, but (other things remaining as they are) nothing to solve the problem itself ; or, by providing opportunities of *intermittent* labour, to remove so much of the distress of unemployment as is due to the ebb and flow of the demand for labour. Such intermittent

labour, to avoid disturbing effects on the productive activities of the people, should not be of a nature to compete with existing industries (or it would fail in its admitted purpose), and should provide the worker with no more than the primary wants of life (or it would draw men from other employment by relieving them of the necessity of seeking such work and of maintaining their efficiency in it). Some attempt is already being made to find a practical method of meeting this difficulty. The root problem of unemployment, however, cannot be solved without a considerable advance in the social instinct of the individuals concerned, the capacity of self-sacrifice for the general welfare, the clear conception in the individual of a duty towards the State and other individuals in addition to the conception of rights to be respected by the latter. Were this instinct a real living force, strong enough to overcome the so-called self-regard of the individual, these difficulties would disappear. The employers would be anxious for the welfare of the employed and strive to promote it, and not cease their concern when the industrial ebb made the worker no longer necessary. The workers would be anxious to produce the best they were capable of, and would encourage each other to do so. They would be prepared to work short hours and draw less wage so that room might be made for the unemployed. While all would recognise that an indiscriminate increase in the population (an unrestrained exercise of the human being's sexual

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self-regard) was one of the main causes of the existence of that hopeless mass, the submerged tenth; and, as such, was an injury to the general body of workers. If all this, or any considerable part of this, is necessary to the solution of that most cruel of human problems, what prospect is there, one might ask, of any great improvement in the near future, when we consider the vast ages of time that have been necessary to bring man to his present moral state?

Fortunately the outlook is not so hopeless as this consideration would make it appear. There is one important factor which must be taken into account in estimating the future, which was entirely absent in the past—the application of the human mind to stimulate and direct the evolutionary process. In the past, man has been but the passive object of the forces making for change. He has lived his little life, seeking his own personal ends, striving to satisfy his own desires, regarding the fate of humanity as a thing quite outside his sphere, and leaving the future to the care of Providence or blind chance as the case might be. He has, however, learned, and has applied his knowledge to the lower animal world, that it is possible to direct the process of evolution, and by the selection and propagation of types which present a desired “variation” to create a species in which that variation is a normal and permanent characteristic. He has not yet attempted in any serious fashion to apply the same principles to the human race, in part from

individualist notions of liberty ; but the results of his experiments with other animals give every reason to believe that he might in the same way determine the direction of change in the human animal also. In short, whereas in the past man has been but the blind progenitor of his successors, he may in the future be in a very real sense their creator.

It has been seen that the living organism has a tendency to vary in a direction largely influenced by its environment, a capacity to recall past impressions, and a tendency to repeat the actions such impressions induced. The power of man to modify the character of the race turns on these qualities of the organic being ; and the State may therefore do something to foster the social instinct by modifying the environment and experiences of the people in an appropriate way. We have been taught the virtue of self-help in the past, and have had instilled into us for generations the desirability of striving for success in the general competitive struggle. The laurel wreath in the shape of wealth and social distinction has been placed upon the brow of the victor, and indifference or contempt has been the portion of the vanquished. It can hardly be denied that the most prominent qualities of modern industrial life—the eagerness for success, the unscrupulous methods of achieving it, cuteness (a quickness to take advantage of another's necessities or ignorance, and a really marvellous ingenuity in inventing ways of circumventing competitors)—are in great measure due to

this influence. The astonishing rapidity with which these qualities have been cultivated gives ground for believing that other qualities could also be instilled in the human being, and raised to a like degree of influence. The process has already begun in some small measure. In school the teaching of the duties of citizenship, the constant inculcation of the qualities that make up the social instinct (both by practice and precept), the holding up to honour those children who display those qualities in the highest degree, the yearly selection (for example) by the vote of the children in the school of the one to be so honoured would do much to shape the character of the coming citizens. The strict insistence by the State that every citizen, while free to direct his activities in his own way consistently with like freedom in others, should recognise and perform his duties to the State and his fellow citizens (rights and duties being inseparably connected, and the enjoyment of the one being dependent on performance of the other) would aid the movement. There are certain sections of the people to whom the State renders merely indirect services in the way of protection, etc. Their duties to the State are at present mainly confined to paying their quota towards the general expenditure. They should be compelled to perform that duty promptly. There are others to whom the State renders direct services (a condition that will increase in the future) by providing for their wants when unemployed and unable or unwilling to provide for

themselves. The State should insist upon the corresponding duty to labour. Much has already been done to compel the employer to provide proper conditions for the employed in mines, factories, etc. This may be extended. The State may take steps to weed out the inefficient, and to prevent their propagation by such means (segregation, sterilisation, etc.,) as may seem most suitable. Honours should be bestowed as a recognition of real services to the community, and not merely, as so often the case, sold for a price. In these and in many other ways the State, as such, could do much to stimulate the growth of the social instinct; and to steady application of these principles, the continual insistence upon duties, must (if there is any truth in "evolution") tend to make the recognition and performance of duties part of the normal character of the citizen. The important influence the State might exercise in this direction has already found tentative expression in legislation; and as these principles come to be more generally accepted and applied a rapid and general improvement in the character of the race may be anticipated. Then, and not till then, will the problem of unemployment, with all it means, approach solution.

The questions involving the primary wants of mankind are intimately bound up with the secondary matters already referred to. Some general idea of the future development of the secondary side of human affairs may in the same way be formed.

As regards the mental condition of the people there is little difficulty in foreseeing a great, perhaps incalculable, improvement. Compulsory education (primitive as many of its methods and ideas are) has only touched one generation ; but it has turned the people into a nation of readers. The character of their literature, mostly of an ephemeral and superficial type, is open to criticism ; but as we do not blame an infant for crawling about more or less aimlessly before it has learned the more efficient use of its limbs, so it would be futile to complain that the first generation of readers is mainly devoted to the idlest and lightest literature. The mental function must pass through the period of youth and experience the phenomena of growth like all other functions ; and the advance already made with little attempt at direction or control foreshadows vast changes when that function reaches maturity. That fuller mental life, with all that it means to the race, will come more quickly as the general circumstances of the mass of the people improve, when the unlovely conditions in which many are condemned to live, and the stress of competition which weighs upon nearly all, diminish, and so lessen the craving for the easy relief and excitement to be found in the light press and novel of to-day.

The growth of the secondary wants has been one of the most prominent features of a progressive industrial society. It has been a consequence of leisure and wealth, and has done

perhaps more than anything else to intensify the inequality that marks the circumstances of different bodies of citizens. There is a growing inclination to rebuke "brainless extravagance"; and we may expect as time goes on to see this human failing checked in two ways—partly by a freer resort to great wealth to supply the financial needs of the State, and partly by a slowly growing public opinion in favour of more rational expenditure, and by worthy examples among the rich of that better use of money. Taxation will do little to cure the real evil since the latter is common in relative degree to both poor and rich. It is, too, the special outcome of the self-regard of the most self-regarding sections of the community, and so least susceptible to the influence of public opinion. We may therefore expect this particular social disease to be long with us, and to be one of the last of human problems to yield to the growing social instinct of mankind.

The division of society into a number of more or less sharply defined classes is also a condition that is likely to continue into the far distant future. "Class" was the outcome of economic and political conditions; and will continue so long as individual liberty (the opportunity within limits to pursue one's own ends) continues. While the natural ability and the artificial opportunities of men vary, so will certain men secure a position superior to others in wealth or influence; and this result can only be avoided by the institution of an iron-bound socialistic system in

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which all are reduced to the same dead level. Such a system, though it may allure the idealist, would be quite impossible in the present stage of human advance ; nor is it in the least likely that the development of the social instinct in man will make such a system possible and stable within any period that can have any real interest for the most speculatively minded of men to-day. It might also be remembered that the more perfect an organism the more complete the division of labour between its parts. In the human body, one of the highest of organisms, there is no homogeneity, no similarity of function or position. There is, however, a complete and efficient distribution of "nutrition" to all its parts ; and the same may be looked for in the perfect social organism. Classes will continue ; but the passive hostility that marks their relations may be expected to give place to a more friendly feeling as time goes on. At present, a modern society is in the intermediate stage between the group and the organism. The various classes, which may be regarded as the separate units of the group, are more intimately connected than in the mere proximity of the elementary group ; but they have not yet developed into a single organism in which each part has its own distinct functions, but in which the activities of each are directed to the well-being of the whole. Society would indeed cease to be an organism if the distinctive characters and functions of its parts were destroyed, or disappeared in one homo-

geneous aggregate of units; and as there is no highly developed organism which is all brain or all muscle, but a mixture of brain and muscle working together in harmony, so the perfect society that in time may evolve from our present state may be expected to show like diversity of parts connected by a like sympathy in their common work. That state of things is of course far beyond our present reach; but we may observe some of the earlier steps in that direction. As the wide problem of the ill-distribution of wealth receives fuller treatment, we shall doubtless see a diminution of the overwhelming contrasts between rich and poor that mark our world to-day. The poor will not become rich; but at least they will be sure of the necessities of existence, and be freed from the wearing anxiety and the incessant struggle which do so much to embitter the relations between mankind. The rich, on their part, will not become poor. Extreme wealth may no longer mark the individual, although the limits will be wide; and we may look for a more tolerant goodwill on their side as a counterpart to the better feelings of the poorer sections of the community. Those voluntary associations which at present exist, though few in number, and in which rich and poor co-operate for the common good, will doubtless increase in numbers and influence, and will help on the sense of common interests between all classes which must be the fundamental characteristic of any real social organism.

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A more interesting and important question arises when we come to consider what changes the future has in store for our system of government. Those changes may be of two kinds; first and most important in the nature of the motive force (involving questions of representation and the spirit which the representatives reflect), and secondly in the character of the parliament, or the machine through which that motive force acts. Our political institutions are in no sense an organism; nor is our Parliament a machine. It would indeed be a curious organism in which the function of one part was to "oppose" the action of the other. Parliament is rather the point of application of a number of forces acting in opposition to each other; and its position is one of unstable equilibrium, tending constantly to shift in the direction of the major force. There is, however, in every human institution a natural inertia or resistance to change, a tendency to maintain its form, corresponding to the character of the human individual. Man as an organism has the organic tendency to repetition, appearing in the human character as habit and prejudice, an instinct so strong that reason alone has little influence over it. It is a common experience that man continues to do things to which his reason is entirely opposed. Acceptance of an existing institution is one such habit; and such institutions may continue to exist long after the intellect has condemned them. There is under our present political system a section which

desires to maintain things as they are (in their essential features)—a “conservative” section in the real sense of the word ; and this section finds in the natural inertia of the institution a very powerful aid. On the other hand, there is a section which desires change ; and this section in its turn finds in the natural inertia of the institution its most powerful obstacle. There is another important factor in the relative influence of these opposing sections. The “conservative” section, so far as its efforts are directed to maintaining the existing state of things, has its mind centred on actually existing things. It is the party of the “real” ; and being concentrated on the single focus, it is capable of common action. On the other hand, the party of change draws its inspiration largely from its ideals ; and, as the number of ideals may possibly equal the number of minds conceiving them, this party lacks a common objective, and is continually liable to division. Further, the party of change in Parliament depends for its parliamentary existence on support among the electorate, and the latter shares the weakness of idealism—a tendency to division and mutual hostility.

This represents in its broad features the existing political system in this country. A multiple party system is inevitable in any individualist society possessing representative institutions. The two-party system has the special advantage that it tends to gather the opposing forces into two definite lines, and avoids the dissipation of

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strength that is incidental to the group. However, the effect of this system is that "re-form" in the strict sense of the word is impossible. There is no attempt by the combined intellect of the nation to determine in what way the institutions of the country should be modified to bring them into accord with the normal character and special needs of the time. Instead, there is this continual tug-of-war. When the party of change acquires sufficient strength to overcome the resistance the machine moves forward with a sudden jerk; and when the impulse has subsided, sinks again into a new position of unstable equilibrium. In its advance it passes over the ground occupied by the most moderate "progressives," and in its new position these lie behind it, bringing new strength to the "conservative" section. The whole political advance in this country has consisted of a series of revolutions—not a voluntary, but a more or less violent, readjustment to new conditions.

What prospect is there that the present system may yield to a better?

From the analogy of organic evolution we might assume that ultimately the Parliamentary institution, like the society which it represents, will develop into an organism, *i.e.* a body, the whole of whose functions and activities are devoted to a common end. The end may be reached in one of two ways—by a continuance of the process of revolution at present in existence, or by a gradual substitution of "re-form." Let us follow the

first. The past century has been marked by a steady extension of the franchise. The process must inevitably continue until, not only will adult manhood suffrage come, but adult female suffrage likewise. The industrial change which turned the woman into an economic unit cannot fail to result in making her also a political unit. The immediate effect of an extension of the suffrage is of small moment, the "conservative" instinct in the individual being so much stronger than the instinct of change; but its ultimate effect is of the last importance. An extension of the franchise brings into the electoral field mainly the working classes; and the growth of class-consciousness tends to throw an ever greater proportion of the "labour" vote into the ranks of the progressives. The addition to the progressive forces presently overcomes the resistance of the other side, and the inertia of the machine. The latter lurches forward, and those on the border line between the two sections find themselves in the ranks of the "conservatives." And so this process might continue; every addition to the forward party being counterbalanced by the passing of the more moderate members to the other side. Moreover, as class distinction is now mainly a question of wealth, so the addition of enfranchised labour to the forward party would mean a defection of capital to the rearward party. This might conceivably go on till, with adult suffrage and a definite class consciousness, the advancing party (of labour), by its overwhelming numbers, held

complete control of the political machine. In that case it is possible that an attempt would be made to eliminate capital (as dissociated from labour), and to create a socialist system on extreme lines. Parliament would have approached the organic stage in that all its members would be devoted to one common purpose ; but the atmosphere of struggle in which this was achieved, implying as it would an incomplete social instinct in the community, and the existence of a strong individualist force, would make the new socialist system unstable, and probably lead to its violent destruction—a new period of individual despotism possibly resulting. This would be the likely result of a mere continuation of the present revolutionary method of advance.

That is, however, against the probabilities of the case. As the mutual hostility of classes fades away, and a real sense of common interests takes its place, the party system in politics must feel the influence of the change. The growing intelligence and humanity of all sections will lessen the acute political antagonism that now separates them. There will be less disposition to dwell solely on the points on which they disagree ; and a growing inclination to consider what changes are in the best interests of the community as a whole. As the antagonism of classes in the State yields to a real co-operation, so may we expect the antagonism of parties in Parliament to give place to co-operation. When that time comes Parliament will have evolved

from a group into an organism. There is another factor that may assist this. As has been pointed out, the course of evolution has made the upper class the natural leaders of the lower. The purely self-regarding actions of the former hitherto have done much to force the lower classes to look for leadership in another direction, among their own ranks. The "instinctive" influence of the upper class is, however, still powerful; and may prove a valuable factor in the organic evolution of the society as the old antagonisms disappear.

Second only to the political institutions stands that of religion in its influence on human affairs. A religious system, whether a state establishment or that of a mere sect, depends for its existence on the special theological dogma which distinguishes it from others. In the field of morality there is no marked distinction between the recognised principles of all. It follows, therefore, that as dogma loses its hold upon the people, as the general conception of the supernatural becomes refined, passing from the purely human deity to a mere abstraction, from the good being to *goodness*, from the Creator of the world to a force "immanent in all things," so will the distinguishing features of sects disappear; while at the same time they will become more and more united on the side of their moral precepts, common not only to the religious but also to the non-religious sections of the community. We may therefore expect to see in the religious institutions of the country a change closely

resembling that in the political. From a number of bodies representing more or less conflicting interests, and dwelling mainly on the things as to which they differ, we may look for the emergence of a body, professing no determinate theological views, but animated by a common desire to improve the moral condition of the race. In the process there will doubtless be many a struggle. The human institution of religious establishments is characterised by the inertia, the resistance to change, common to all other institutions. Progress in religion, in an individualist society, is likewise a series of small revolutions; while at each step gained in advance certain individuals join the ranks of the resisters. Just as in politics the growing activity and cohesion of the masses tend to a concentration of the interests in favour of maintaining the existing state of things, so in religion the decay of dogmatic belief and the growth of a common moral sense in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom tends to a concentration of those who desire to maintain the influence of dogma. The central stronghold of that influence is in the Church of Rome; and in the widening gap between the Broad Church and the High Church parties in this country, the tendency of the former to find a wider field of interests in common with Nonconformist bodies, and on the other hand the movement of the latter towards the Church of Rome we may see the evolution in full progress. The ultimate end of this movement may be forecast with some

measure of certainty, although the length of the struggle, and the events that may mark it, can hardly be foreseen. There is little doubt that at a comparatively early moment the State Establishment in this country will disappear. At a later time the distinct nonconformist bodies will lose their separate existence. They are at present distinguished by various religious tenets and ceremonies. That cause of separation cannot long survive the decay of dogmatic belief. Moreover, as the social instinct of the people strengthens, and the moral activity of religious bodies becomes more predominant, the leaders of those bodies will be chosen, not for their scholastic attainments in the field of theology, not for their mere oratorical and debating powers, nor for their social position or private influence, but for the qualities which fit them to be the real moral leaders of the people. When morality has become the one active principle of religious bodies they may well become co-terminous with the State itself. In the meantime we may be satisfied if a growing tolerance of purely theological opinions leads religious bodies to-day to a fuller co-operation in the work of cultivating and strengthening the moral instincts of the people.

Enough perhaps has been said to indicate the path in which the social instinct of the people is progressing. We may hope that in time under its influence the nation will cease to be a mere aggregate of conflicting units, and become an organic body in which each part, with special

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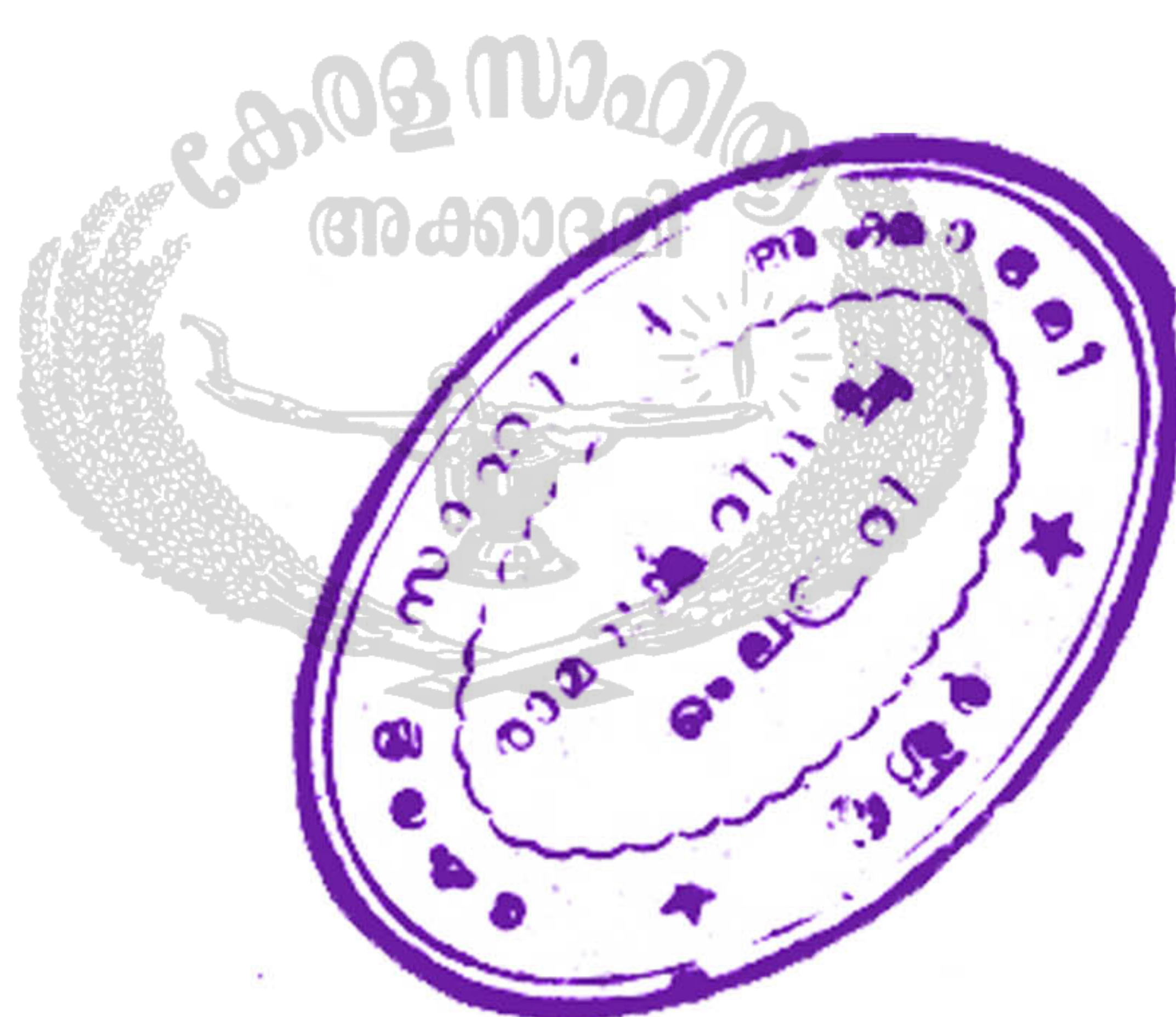
functions of its own, is but working towards a common end—the welfare of the whole.

It is possible to look beyond this moment into the dim future, and to see the nations becoming ever more closely united till they too have emerged from the mere group to the fully organised body. To the man of that day the history of humanity will present a complete and coherent picture. He will be able to trace the wonderful panorama—the cell to the group of independent cells—the group to the simple organism—the simple organism through its many stages up to man himself—the isolated man to the group of independent men—the group to the simple society or partially organised body of men—the simple society to the complex society of the present day—from the complex, partially organised society of to-day to the complete organism of the future—from the isolated nations to the group of nations—from the group of nations to the final consummation, a whole humanity as one vast organism, each individual unit living its own life and exercising its own special functions ; but each nevertheless having for its ultimate object the wellbeing of the whole.

This outline of the progress of humanity is consistent with the facts of evolution so far as they are known at present. The recognition of this long process as the consequence of certain fundamental qualities of living matter may bring home to us the fact that the race can only

advance step by step, that safe progress can only be secured by learning the next step and concentrating all effort upon it, and that the attempt to reach the ideal at one stroke is not only destined to certain failure, but may result in destroying much of such measure of progress the race has already achieved. To the idealist these facts may bring some disillusionment; and yet, in truth, though for the enthusiasm of such a one they may give but a sober hope, they do nevertheless give a certain hope, and indicate the lines on which, and on which alone, that hope may be realised.





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PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,
EDINBURGH

